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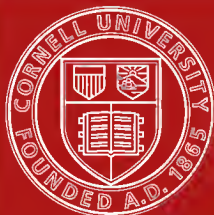
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THE QUESTION:

“If a man die, shall he live again?”

JOB xiv. 14.

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“ If a man die, shall he live again ? ”

JOB xiv. 14.

A BRIEF HISTORY AND EXAMINATION OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

BY

EDWARD CLODD

WITH A POSTSCRIPT BY
PROFESSOR H. E. ARMSTRONG, F.R.S.

*“ Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life.”*

George Meredith.

NEW YORK
EDWARD J. CLODE



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TO
MY VALUED FRIEND
PROFESSOR HENRY EDWARD ARMSTRONG
PH.D., LL.D., D.Sc., F.R.S.

PREFACE

THE subject of this book is not a history of the origin of the belief in immortality, but an examination of the evidence on which those who call themselves Spiritualists base that belief.

It is to be regretted that this general term should have been appropriated by them; Materialists, they should have been named, because they assert that souls are made of highly tenuous matter. But the mischief is done and the self-applied term must remain their monopoly.

Two generations have passed since Spiritualism gained a footing in this country, wherefore it seems well that its origin and early history should have record. Few know that it came of tainted parentage and that it grew up in an atmosphere of fraud, which still clings to it.

My wife has helped me in the tedious work of collecting materials and of revising proofs. The thankless task of proof-reading has also been undertaken by my friend Professor H. E. Armstrong, F.R.S., who further adds to my obligations in accepting the dedication of this book, and, of his own accord, contributing a Postscript.

E. C.

STRAFFORD HOUSE, ALDEBURGH,
SUFFOLK, *July*, 1917.

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PART I
INTRODUCTORY

INTRODUCTORY

“Yea, they have all one breath.”—*Ecclesiastes* iii. 19.

IN astronomical observations absolute accuracy is impossible, because eyes and other conditions vary in each observer: hence variation in the reports which each brings. To arrive at a sure result, there are made such additions to, or subtractions from, a number of observations of the same celestial object as will compensate for known causes of error. This is called “personal equation,” a term once restricted to science, but now applied generally to denote allowances to be made in respect of opinions due to bias or idiosyncrasy. This equation, arrived at by the astronomer, eliminates error. Mathematically equipped, he issues *The Nautical Almanack*, which, for the guidance of seamen on long voyages, tabulates the exact places of the leading heavenly bodies on each day for a period of four years. The astronomer reckons backwards as easily as forwards: he calculates the date of an eclipse that happened centuries ago, or the year when a comet will return. For the material on which he works is found to be unvarying in its operation.

Not thus is it with the psychologist. He has to deal with a complex and unstable organ—the most

marvellous thing in the world, the human brain: a mass of matter of which more than four-fifths is water, and containing, it is computed, about three thousand million cells whose motor, sensory and association centres are located in its cortex or outer grey rind. It is an apparatus so delicately poised that the wonder is not that it sometimes goes wrong, but that it ever goes right. No certitude can attach to its behaviour; there is always risk of the abnormal to upset calculations.

Once more to contrast psychology and astronomy. The irregularities in the motion of Uranus set the mathematicians in quest of the position of the disturbing body: the brilliant result was the discovery of the planet Neptune. But what formula can we apply to the irregular activities of the mind? The normal mind has its fallacies, the abnormal mind has its delusions and illusions, and as if these were not enough to baffle us, there is the strange phenomenon of multiple, dissociated "personality" which the late Mr. Myers termed the "subliminal self," literally, "beneath the threshold" (*limen*) of actual or present consciousness. Some have misconstrued this as implying an *alter ego*, whereas what is meant is a cerebral region wherein are stored-up myriads of impressions which have passed unheeded by us into our potential consciousness, and which become active under various, often abnormal, mental states. The most notable example of the "subliminal self" or "selves," since Mr. Myers admits the plural form, is that of the neurasthenic "Miss Beauchamp" (an assumed name) with her fourfold states of consciousness: now serious, now impish; now in open rup-

ture, one against three; one "personality" dressing smartly; one donning Quaker-like garb; and so forth in extraordinary alternations tragico-comic.¹ A further example is that of a man who in September, 1910, was brought on a charge of theft before a London magistrate, who discharged him on the medical evidence that the man was an epileptic and had committed the theft while in a secondary state of consciousness. Perhaps these abnormal workings throw light on the old belief in the demon-possessed, the bewitched, the lycanthropes and allied superstitions.

The theories broached by men of science can be proved or disproved by experiment and observation, and when, after repeated tests, the results anticipated by the theory are found to be unvarying, the theory is established. Every doubting person, given the chance and capacity, can verify these results for himself; as a rule there is acceptance, without challenge, of what collective authority has verified. But in investigating the phenomena of spiritualism no experimental tests are forthcoming; only the experiential, which is a very different thing. In the strict sense of the term, no scientific proof is possible. We have to accept or reject what Spiritualists tell us, and supplement this, so far as we can, by observations made, as will be shown hereafter, under difficulties not attending other branches of research.

To return to the mechanism of the brain. We

¹ *The Dissociation of a Personality: a Biographical Study in Abnormal Psychology*. By Morton Prince, M.D. (1906). See also for a case of double personality Professor Pierre Janet's *Major Symptoms of Hysteria* (1907).

know that all the thoughts that we think and all the emotions that we feel are accompanied by certain chemical changes or molecular vibrations in the nerve-tissues; changes in the nerve-centres responding to external stimuli. We know that the healthy working of the brain depends on the maintenance of its expended energy by food; that if a man be starved or stupefied, paralysed or palsied, the elaborate machinery is thrown out of gear. Recent research indicates that a permanence possibly attaches to the nerve-cells which is not shared by the body-cells. Unlike these, the neurons are adapted to last the entire life of the organism of which they form a part; but, once destroyed, they cannot be replaced.¹ What we further know is our ignorance. Brain and mind are interdependent, but we cannot apply physico-chemical processes to mental processes; the gulf between the two is, and, seemingly, will remain, impassable. All the reactions and responses of our brains to our surroundings are accompanied by changes in consciousness, but what consciousness is passes the wit of man to discover. Huxley puts it with his never-failing clearness: "If a man says that consciousness cannot exist, except in relation of cause and effect with certain molecules, I must ask how he knows that; and if he says that it can, I must put the same question."² That is the impregnable position of biological science as defined by one of its greatest expositors. "Soul is known to us only in a brain,

¹ "Nature and Nurture in Mental Development." By F. W. Mott, F.R.S. *Science Progress*, October, 1913, p. 306.

² *Collected Essays*. Vol. ix., p. 141.

but the special note of soul is that it is capable of existing without a brain, or after death.”¹ That is the unverifiable assumption of theology. And when a reviewer of *Raymond* in *Nature*, which may, perhaps, be regarded as the representative scientific journal in this country, says that “Life is not a form of energy,” that “it guides and directs energy, but there is no sound reason to believe that it goes out of existence when it ceases to manifest through a particular body,”² he expresses only a personal “pious opinion.”

In a review of the same book, Sir Conan Doyle, allowing rhetorical eulogy to take the place of sober assessment of a momentous theme, affirms that the record therein is a “new revelation of God’s dealings with man which must modify some ill-defined and melancholy dogmas as to the events which follow the death of the body.”³ In what degree the contents of *Raymond* justify this remarkable claim on its behalf to be an inspired supplement to, or supersession of, an old revelation will be more fully considered later on. Does the “new revelation” “modify” dogmas about the soul’s destiny, or, changing the terms, only reaffirm them? Will it add a hitherto undreamt-of significance to the words: “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”⁴ We shall see.

¹ *Modern Theories in Philosophy and Religion*, p. 328. By Principal Tulloch.

² *Nature*, 14th December, 1916.

³ *Observer*, 25th November, 1916.

⁴ Matthew xiii. 17.

At the outset of the inquiry, a hearing must be accorded to what the anthropologist has to say on the pedigree of Spiritualism. We shall learn from him that this pedigree stretches into a dim and dateless past, reaching to the animistic stage in the evolution of religion: a stage when men conceived of spirits indwelling in everything, and when, as world-wide evidence shows, largely through the experience of dreams, shadows and reflections of himself and suchlike bewildering phenomena, there dawned upon him the sense of personality—an *alter ego*—something apart from the body. On such a plane are the natives of Australia, who stand at the bottom level of culture. One of the Kurnai tribe told Mr. Howitt that his *yambo*, or spirit, could leave the body. "It must be so," he said, "for when I sleep I go to far away places; I see distinct people, I even see and speak with those who are dead."¹ Hence, in the lower culture, the widespread avoidance of waking a sleeper, because his soul may be absent; and the European folk-custom of not turning a sleeper over lest the absent soul should miss the way back. To the savage dreams are true, not only "while they last," but long afterwards. They link the lowest minds with the highest; the Australian with the great Roman poet Lucretius when he speaks of that which "scares us, when buried in sleep, so that we seem to see and hear face to face those who are dead and gone, whose bones the earth holds in its embrace."²

Both savage and spiritualist are one in belief in

¹ *Journal Anthropol. Institute.* Vol. xiii., p. 189.

² *De Rerum Natura.* Book I., pp. 133-135.

the survival and return of the soul, and in their vague conception of its nature.

In wellnigh every language, both barbaric and civilised, the word for "spirit" and "breath" is the same. Yahweh (Jehovah) breathed into Adam's "nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"¹; and in barbaric belief the soul of the dying man departs through his nostrils. It is by his breath that the medicine-man among the tribes of the north-west Amazons works his cures; "sometimes he will breathe on his own hand and then massage the affected part."² The association between breath and spiritual transfer has examples in Jesus breathing upon the disciples when imparting to them the Holy Ghost, and in the conferring of supernatural grace in the rites and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church. When an ancient Roman lay at the point of death, his nearest relative inhaled the last breath to ensure the continuance of the spirit, while the same reason prompted the act of a dying Lancashire witch, a friend receiving her last breath, and with it, as was verily believed, her familiar spirit. "That they sucked-in the last breath of their expiring friends was surely a practice of no medical institution, but a loose opinion that the soul passed out that way, and a fondness of affection, from some Pythagorical foundation, that the spirit of one body passed into another which they wished might be their own."³

Emanuel Swedenborg, to whom, as will be shown,

¹ Genesis ii. 7.

² T. Whiffen, *N. W. Amazons*, p. 180.

³ Sir Thomas Browne, "Hydriotaphia" (*Works*, Vol. iii., p. 130. 1907 edition.)

the more recent developments of Spiritualism are traceable, elaborated a theory of breathing, the different modes of which he correlated with spirit-breathing. "Inward thoughts have inward breaths, and purer spiritual thoughts have spiritual breaths hardly mixed with material" . . . hence "the varying species of respiration produce for their subject divers introductions to the spiritual and angelic powers with whom the lungs *conspire*."¹ Long before his time the early Hindus had formulated a theory of connection between the physical and the psychical in breathing, the reduction in the frequency of which induced or aided meditative calm, and the fakirs and yogi ascetics of to-day regulate their breathing even to cultivation of its suspension so that the spirit may obtain mastery over the flesh. In line with this is a statement by Dr. Hare, in his *Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations, demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and their Communion with Mortals*, that he was informed by the spirits that "they differ from one another in density and that they have a fluid circulating through an arterial and venous system which is subject to a respiratory process."²

The conception of the soul as ethereal is universal: herein do savages and spiritualists think as one. The only differences are in the degrees of tenuity of vaporousness. In Tongan belief the soul is the aeriform part of the body, related to it as the perfume to the flower; the Greenlanders describe it as pale and soft, fleshless and boneless; the Congo

¹ *Emanuel Swedenborg*, p. 78. By Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson.

² Quoted in Mr. F. Podmore's *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 37.

negroes leave the hut of the dead unswept for a year, lest the dust should injure the delicate substance of the ghost; the German peasants avoid slamming a door lest a soul gets pinched in it; and both French and English rustics open a door or window that the departing soul may have free egress. The natives of Melanesia say that it is grey, like dust, vanishing as soon as looked at; the Caribs that it is subtle and thin, and the Nicaraguans that it is like the air passing in and out through the mouth and nostrils. Greeks, Romans, Hebrews and the early Fathers of the Church alike conceived of it as of thin, impalpable nature; in the Arabian romance of *Yokdhan* the hero discovers in one of the heart's cavities a bluish vapour, which was a man's soul. In *The Report on the Census on Hallucinations*, taken by the authority of the Society for Psychical Research, a "Mr. P." affirms that as his boy lay dying, he saw a blue flame in the air. "It hovered above me," he says, "for a few seconds . . . a few minutes later the child died."¹

"And the souls mounting up to God
Went by her like thin flames,"

sings Rossetti in *The Blessed Damozel*. In his Third Book, wherein are marshalled more than twenty arguments against immortality, Lucretius says: "I have shown the soul to be fine and to be formed of minute bodies and made up of much smaller first beginnings than is the liquid of water or mist or smoke."² Hampole, in his *Ayenbite of Inwyt* (*i.e.* the again-biting of the inner wit, or the *Prick of*

¹ *Proceedings*, August, 1894, p. 126.

² Book III., pp. 425-428.

Conscience), a poem of the fourteenth century, speaks of the more intense suffering which the soul undergoes by reason of its delicate nature:

"The soul is more tendre and nesche (soft)
Than the bodi that hath bones and fleysche."¹

Montaigne cites a number of classic authors on the "soule in generale," all of them conceiving that it is, as to the Chaldeans, "a vertue without any determinate forme."² Descartes can get no further: "What the soul itself was I either did not stay to consider, or, if I did, I imagined that it was something extremely rare and subtle, like mind or flame or ether, spread through my grosser parts."³ ("Observing that the pineal gland is the only part of the brain that is single, Descartes was determined by this to make that gland the soul's habitation.")⁴ "Men," says Hobbes, "could not fall upon any other conceipt but that the soule was of the same substance with that which appeareth in a Dream to one that sleepeth or in a Looking-glasse to one that is awake."⁵

In a wellnigh forgotten book, *The Unseen Universe or Physical Speculations on a Future State*, published anonymously in 1875, and afterwards acknowledged as the joint work of two eminent physicists, the late Professors Balfour Stewart and P. G. Tait, it was argued that while the effect of a portion of our mental activity is to leave a permanent record on the brain-cells, thus constituting "a

¹ Reprint in Early English Text Society. Ed. Dr. R. Morris.

² *Essays*. Book II., chapter xii.

³ *Meditationes de primâ Philosophiâ*. Vol. ii., p. 10.

⁴ Reid, *Philos. of the Intellectual Powers*. Vol. ii., chapter iv., p. 99.

⁵ *Leviathan*. Part I., chapter xii., "Of Man."

material organ of memory," the effect of the remaining portion is to set up thought-waves across the ether and to construct by these means, in some part of the unseen universe, our spiritual body.¹ How the vibrations transmitted by the ethereal medium into that universe could be located so as to avoid collision between the vibrations emanating from each individual brain the authors did not make clear. Cast in the same primitive mould, their theory anticipated that of the Rev. Adin Ballou's subtle ethero-spiritual substance which he calls "spiricity,"² and, more definitely, Dr. Ashburnam's theory that a train of thought is composed of globules which can be seen by clairvoyants streaming visibly from the brain.³ Sergeant Cox, a master in the Spiritualistic Israel, was convinced that the substance of the soul "is vastly more refined than the thinnest gas or the vapour of a comet's tail"⁴; Sir Oliver Lodge approvingly quotes the late F. W. H. Myers' "surmise" that "personality has a kind of semi-bodily existence; a sort of ethereal, or, as some would say, spiritual body still in fact subsisting."⁵ Again, in *Raymond*, "We change our state at death and enter a region of—what? Of ether, I think."⁶ With the vagueness which infuses all deliverances on this subject, Mr. J. A. Hill says: "As to the nature

¹ "The motions which accompany thought must also affect the invisible order of things, while the forces which cause these motions are likewise derived from the same region, and thus it follows that thought conceived to affect the matter of another universe simultaneously with this may explain a future state."—*The Unseen Universe*, p. 199. (Fourth edition.)

² Podmore, *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 302.

³ *Ibid.* Vol. ii., p. 16.

⁴ *Ibid.* Vol. ii., p. 174.

⁵ *Quarterly Review*, July, 1903, p. 226,

⁶ P. 298.

of the after-life . . . some great differences there must be, for our shedding of the sensory organs must presumably bring about considerable change in the mode and context of our perceptions, and consequently no very clearly comprehensible descriptions can come through.”¹ A medium whom Mr. Hill consults “gets at the length of time that has elapsed since death partly by a direct impression or intuition, and partly by the solidity or thinness of the form.”² Orthodoxy, not always in accord with Spiritualism, greets it in the person of the Rev. Professor Henslow, who, in his *Present-day Rationalism Critically Examined*, suggests that “ether is the basis of the soul,” while an American writer, Mr. Henry Frank, in his *Modern Light on Immortality*, asserts that “invisible bioplasm or vital substance exists in every minute portion of the body, and that could the body-shell be removed we should have a phosphorescent duplicate of ourselves.” In all this we are as the farmer with his claret: we “don’t seem to get no forrader.”

The discarnate soul is not envisaged as amorphous; it is a replica of the body, appearing to believers in the “new revelation” in no “questionable shape.” “Man’s spirit,” says Swedenborg, “is his mind, which lives after death in complete human form.”³ Complete or mutilated, in barbaric ideas, according to its having been unharmed or injured during its earthly career. The Australian natives cut off the thumb of a slain foe so that he cannot throw the

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1917, p. 118.

² *Psychical Investigations*, p. 67.

³ Quoted in Tylor’s *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 450.

shadow spear in the land of shadows. In Nicaraguan belief, when a man dies there comes out of his mouth something resembling a person. On Greek vases the soul is depicted as issuing from the mouth in the form of a homunculus, and that Christian art falls into line with this conception is seen in the frescoes on the walls of the Campo Santo at Pisa, where the soul is portrayed as a sexless child emerging from the mouth of a corpse. In an elaborately sculptured monument over the tomb of Bishop Giles de Bridport in the east transept of Salisbury Cathedral the soul is represented as a naked figure being carried by an angel to heaven.

Among the Nias Islanders of the Indian Archipelago souls are weighed out for those who are yet to be born: the child in the womb is asked by the god Balin if he will choose a heavy or light soul—that is, a long life or a short life, and a natural or a violent death. The maximum weight allotted is about ten grammes. Elsewhere, the soul is found to weigh a little more.¹ One Dr. Duncan McDougall, of Boston, U.S.A. (all sensational discoveries honour America as their birthplace), reported, as the result of weighing several bodies at the very moment of death, having found that in each case there was a loss of weight of from half-an-ounce to an ounce. The very second of death was determined by the instant dropping of the opposite scale. This, with an ingenuity creditable to his imagination, but not to any sense of humour, he assumed represented the loss through the departure of the soul. He adds that there was always a loss of weight in human

¹ A. E. Crawley, *Idea of the Soul*, p. 122.

beings, but the result in each case when a dog's corpse was placed in scales balanced to a fraction of an ounce was that the weight remained exactly the same.¹ This seems to tell against the belief in the immortality of animals which is held by some spiritualists. But they can take comfort in the evidence—*quantum valeat*—adduced by Raymond Lodge's little Indian girl "control," Feda. Speaking through the medium, Mrs. Leonard, she says: "He has brought that doggie again, nice doggie. A doggie that goes like this and twists about (Feda indicating a wriggle)." ² Apparently accepting Dr. Duncan McDougall's conclusions, Mr. Edward Carpenter remarks that "it would be satisfactory to know how far modern observation of a normal soul-weight corresponds with ancient speculation in the matter."³ His reference, of course, is to the ancient Egyptian idea of the weighing of the heart or soul after death in the Hall of the Two Goddesses of Truth before the deceased could enter the kingdom of Osiris. A reference to possible experiments on soul-weight in ancient Rome occurs in the Third Book of Lucretius: "So soon as the deep rest of death hath fallen upon a man, and the mind and life have departed, you can perceive then no diminution of the whole body either in appearance or weight: death makes all good save the vital sense and heat."⁴ *Mutatis mutandis*; the doctrine of continuity applied to theories of a spirit-world is further "justified of

¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 12th March, 1907. The full report appears to be given in the *Annals of the American Society for Psychical Research*, June, 1907.

² *Raymond*, p. 203.

³ *Drama of Love and Death*, p. 185.

⁴ Book III., 211-215,

its children." The unbroken connection between the old and the new animism has examples in fairydom and devildom. Concerning the former, we learn, on the authority of the Rev. Robert Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies*, published in 1691, that the fairies, as the philosophers tell us of matter, exist in various "states." Some are of the nature of "condensed cloud or of congealed air"; others have "bodies or vehicles spongy, thin and defecat," while the rest are of grosser texture. They "speak but little and that by way of whistling."¹ So with the denizens of ghostland in their squealing and twittering, both in Homer's underworld and the Hebrew sheol. In the *Iliad* it is told how "like a vapour the spirit was gone beneath the earth with a faint shriek."² "The souls of Penelope's Paramours conducted by Mercury chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules made a noise, but like a flock of birds."³ Isaiah writes of the "familiar spirit out of the ground whose speech shall whisper out of the dust."⁴ When Calpurnia, Cæsar's wife, urges him not to leave the palace because of "horrid sights seen by the watch," she says:

"The graves have yawn'd and yielded up their dead,
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets,"

and in *Hamlet*, Horatio, referring to the murder of Cæsar, says:

¹ P. 6. 1893 (reprint in *Bibliothèque de Carabas*).

² Book XXIII., p. 100.

³ Sir Thomas Browne, *Works*. Vol. iii., p. 132 (1907 edition).

⁴ Chapter XXIX., 4.

⁵ *Julius Cæsar*, Act II., sc. 2.

"A little ere the mightiest Julius fell
The graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman street." ¹

The Solomon Islanders compare the voice of the soul to a whisper; in the weird cries of the loris and the lemur the Malagasy natives hear the wailing of the *lemures*,² the unquiet spirits of their ancestors, and to the ears of the Algonquin Indians the shadow-souls of the dead chirped like crickets. In the case of the famous Epworth Rectory ghost, when the Rev. Samuel Wesley tried to get into conversation with it, he says that he received in response "only once or twice two or three very feeble squeaks, a little louder than the chirping of a bird." However, when the family prayers were offered up for the House of Hanover, the Jacobite poltergeist knocked loudly in protest!

The exponents of modern Spiritualism give no clear lead in the matter of demonology and witchcraft. There appears to be only occasional place in its scheme for Satan and his gang of demons who are alleged to possess the bodies of human beings and animals, notably among these latter, according to the sacred record, swine.³ The existence of evil spirits is conveniently assumed by apologists as abetting mediums in frauds; "and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."⁴ (See *infra*, p. 182.) Certainly there is no place therein for witches, with their Sabbath orgies, black masses, nocturnal rides on broomsticks, and

¹ Act I., sc. 1.

² Lat., *lemur* = a ghost, from their stealthy movements and plaintive cries.

³ Luke viii. 32, 33.

⁴ 2 Cor. xi. 14.

transformation of old crones into cats and hares. Yielding to "the form and pressure of the time," the places in the occult that knew them once know them no more. The house, empty, swept, and garnished, is filled with seven other occupants, bearing other names.

Timely is the warning given by Professor Gilbert Murray that "the great thing to remember is that the mind of man cannot be enlightened permanently by merely teaching him to reject some particular set of superstitions. There is an infinite supply of other superstitions always at hand, and the mind that desires such things—that is, the mind that has not trained itself to the hard discipline of reasonableness and honesty—will, as soon as its devils are cast out, proceed to fill itself with their relations."¹

The physical phenomena of earlier and, presumably, more ignorant times as to the nature and behaviour of the occult have given place in large degree to psychical phenomena; to the clairvoyants and to the trance-utterances of mediums. The quasi-physical, as we may perhaps define materialised spirit-forms, are now little, if at all, in evidence, nor does belief in the genuineness of the photographs of these diaphanous anæmics now obtain credence save from the very few who follow Mr. Edward Carpenter in regarding that genuineness as "beyond question."² But, physical or psychical, "the trail of the serpent" is over it all.

¹ *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 111.

² *The Drama of Love and Death*, p. 186.

PART II

**PHYSICAL PHENOMENA OF
SPIRITUALISM**



I

HISTORICAL

"Write me down in a book and send me the life and adventures, the tricks and frauds, of the impostor Alexander Abonoteichos."—LUCIAN: "Alexander the Oracle Monger."

"Create a belief in the theory, and the facts will create themselves."—JOSEPH JASTROW: "Fact and Fable in Psychology."

THE phenomena of Modern Spiritualism are twofold: physical and psychical. They are more or less intermingled in the poltergeist¹ and clairvoyant, and in outlining the history of the movement the actions of the one cannot be understood without those of the other.

The following is a convenient classification.

A. PHYSICAL

Raps, Table-turning, etc.
 Examples, *Fox, Phelps*.
 Levitation, etc.
 Example, *Home*.
 Slate-writing, etc.
 Example, *Slade*.
 Miscellaneous.
 Examples, *Stainton Moses, Eusapia Palladino*.
 Materialisation of Spirits.
 Photographs of Spirits.
 Ghosts and Haunted Houses.

B. PSYCHICAL

Trance States.
 Example, *Swedenborg*.
 Clairvoyancy.
 Crystal-gazing.
 Telepathy and Hallucinations.
 Trance Mediums.
 Examples, *Mrs. Piper, Mrs. Leonard* (in *Raymond*).
 Cross Correspondence.
 Example, *Mrs. Verrall*.
 Theosophy.
 Example, *Madame Blavatsky*.
 Christian Science.
 Example, *Mrs. Eddy*.

Modern Spiritualism had its origin in a very humble way seventy years ago in America, land of

¹ A noisy spirit. German *f.*, *polter*, noise, uproar; and *geist*, ghost.

“many inventions.” A generation earlier the seed whence the movement sprang had been sporadically planted in the receptive soil from which Shakers and Universalists gathered a more fruitful crop than could be reaped in England: a soil which nourished Mormons, Second Adventists, Perfectionists of Oneida Creek, Brotherhoods of the New Life, and communities of the type of Brook Farm, with their dreams of a new heaven and a new earth. From the same generous soil sprang, in these later days, the Revivalists, Moody and Sankey, the Prophet Dowie, and the Christian Scientist, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy. The Revivalists, after stirring up the emotions of their fellow-countrymen and leaving them to simmer, have periodically shown solicitude for the unconverted in this and other lands, striving to awaken sinners by rousing services blended of song and sensation, only, in many cases, to have begotten hysterical extravagances, making the last state of the “converted” worse than their first. It is also to America that spiritualists here are indebted for a ceaseless stream of mediums since the arrival of the first, a Mrs. Hayden, in 1852. Boston remains the chief market of world-supply.

In a relatively new civilisation there is freedom from the trammels of conventions which repress the individual and which bar the intrusion of disturbing elements bringing new ideas in their train. And there is a mentality among the American people which makes them peculiarly responsive to whatever is novel and appeals to the imagination. This may be less marked at the present time when so large an alien element is being infused, but it was active at

the time when Spiritualism and allied movements "caught on."

In March, 1848, the household of a farmer named Fox, who with his wife and their two young daughters, Margaret and Katie, lived in a one-storied log house at Hydeville, in the State of New York, was disturbed at night by knockings and like uncanny noises, the louder of which came from the girls' bed. Soon after, these were repeated, sound for sound, being answered by raps at certain letters in response to Katie Fox snapping her fingers. The letters, when taken down in writing, made up connected words and sentences. The father and mother, who were devout Methodists, believed that these messages were due to spirits. Neighbours were called in, one of whom, apparently an expert in the rapping-alphabet, learned from the answers that these came from the spirit of a pedlar who had been murdered in the house and buried in the cellar, which was then under water. The spirit went on to describe the murder in detail. The news spread: crowds of people were drawn to the spot, and, so goes the story as told later on, when the cellar was dry, diggings revealed, some feet down, a few teeth, bones and hair, all presumably human. Soon after this sensational discovery Margaret Fox went to Rochester, New York, to stay with her married sister, and Kate went on a visit to friends in Auburn, a town near by. In both places the raps went on more vigorously than at Hydeville; the married sister and the friends at Auburn became sharers in spiritual gifts; rappings were the order of the day, or, rather, of the night, since all the spirits

“love darkness rather than light”¹—to complete the quotation would be to anticipate. (Of Katie Fox Mr. A. P. Sinnett says: “She was so remarkable a medium for the rapping manifestation that often when she entered the house where I was staying raps would flutter all over the house in broad daylight.”²) A year later a correspondent of *The Spiritual World* estimated “that there were a hundred mediums in New York City, and fifty or sixty ‘private circles’ are reported in Philadelphia.”³ It was estimated that in seven years the number of believers in spiritualism in America had reached two millions, a number now largely exceeded.

Copying a custom of the Methodists, American spiritualists hold annually big “camp meetings,” whither crowds flock from all parts. The chief resort is Lily Dale, where a large hotel is crammed, and the cottages are rented by mediums of all sorts: slate-writers, sealed-letter readers, spirit photographers, and a motley lot of “camp-followers” in the shape of astrologers, palmists, and fortune-tellers.

It may here be well to explain what is meant by a spiritualist “circle.”

First, “Picture to yourself a little chamber into which no very brilliant light was admitted, with a crowd of people from all quarters, excited, carefully worked-up, all a-flutter with expectation.” These words are eighteen hundred years old; in them

¹ John iii. 19.

² “Dr. Crozier and Spiritualism.” *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1917, p. 865.

³ Podmore’s *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 183.

Lucian, immortal satirist, describes how the medium, Alexander of Abonoteichos, arranged the properties for a séance.

Writing under the disguise of "M.A.Oxon," a prominent medium, the late Rev. Stainton Moses, issued a leaflet of *Advice to Inquirers on the Conduct of Circles*, from which these instructions are quoted: "When you think the time has come, let someone take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable and ask that a tilt may be given [*i.e.* to the table round which the circle sits "in subdued light"] as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for 'No,' three for 'Yes,' and two tilts to express doubt or uncertainty. [A most ancient code: see *infra*, p. 83.]

"After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium and such relevant questions.

"The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals and ask, as the raps become clear, that they may be made on the table, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means, but avoid any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. It rests greatly with the sitters to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous and even tricky." "M.A.Oxon" concludes with this counsel: "Try the results you get by the light of Reason. Do not enter into a very solemn investi-

gation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death."

Concerning the "subdued light," it is interesting to note that Reginald Scot, in the chapter on "Magical Circles" in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, published in 1584, says that "as for the places for these, they are to be chosen melancholy, doleful, dark and lonely . . . or else in some large parlour hung with black."¹

The Hydeville story is the forerunner of a succession of records of mysterious phenomena of the poltergeist type, whose variety in detail warrants reference to some happenings in the household of a Presbyterian minister, Dr. Phelps, of Stratford, Connecticut. In March, 1850, there began and continued for a year and a half a series of disturbances which showed a blend of sprite-like and transcendental elements in the spirits who were credited as the cause. There were visions of figures of angelic beauty, varied by high kicks of the furniture. According to the narrative supplied later on by persons who were not eye-witnesses, in one of the rooms eleven lovely women, with Bibles in front of them, were kneeling in seraphic joy, their fingers pointing to verses apparently relating to the strange occurrences. At another time the windows were smashed; objects were thrown by invisible hands; brickbats started from mirrors and fell on the floor; turnips covered with hieroglyphs grew out of the pattern under the carpet; shovel and tongs moved to the middle of the parlour and waltzed; the big

¹ P. 472 (1886, reprint).

table rose two feet in the air; letters, written by no human hands, were wafted down, and from the viewless air a large potato dropped near the reverend master as he sat at breakfast. At dinner the spoons and forks flew up out of the dishes; and a turnip followed the example of the potato. These pranks recall the old nursery rhyme:

“Hey diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle;
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran after the spoon.”

Nor were the children exempted from this horse-play. Invisible powers carried the elder boy across the room and cut his trousers into strips; at another time a lamp on the mantelpiece in his bedroom moved from its place and set fire to some papers on his bed; while his sleeping sister was nearly smothered by a pillow drawn over her face, and nearly strangled by a tape tied round her neck. As for the raps, they purported to come from a spirit who had been a lawyer's clerk, and who said that he was in hell because he had cheated Dr. Phelps's wife in drawing up her marriage settlement!

The excitement created by the Stratford phenomena brought thither one Andrew Jackson Davis by name, son of a shoemaker, for not “many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called” to such great services. Three years before the Fox rappings he had exhibited power as a clairvoyant and faith-healer. Fame came to him early because he had been singularly privileged by the spirits of Galen and Swedenborg

appearing to him while in a trance, and instructing him concerning his beneficent mission to mankind. Davis gave as his judgment that vital electricity in the boy's organism accounted for the raps, and that the spirits controlled the movements causing the general disturbances. The hieroglyphs on the turnips he interpreted as this message from the spirit-world: "A high society of angels desire through the agency of another and a more inferior society to communicate in various ways to the earth's inhabitants."¹

Returning to the circles: music, the sensuous, and low comedy contributed to their "variety" show. The medium whom raps from the Intelligence had made known was his chosen vehicle, acting under the essential condition of "subdued light," filled the air with perfumes, music was wafted from shut pianos, from concertinas held in one hand, and rung from bells unpulled. Flowers and fruits were strewn among the circle; and, less agreeable, if more satisfying, live eels and lobsters, pots of jam and rolls of lard, supplied a special menu. For further entertainment tables were turned or tilted, and other articles of furniture moved, either visibly, or more often, in the dark, or in such a way that only results were seen.

Shortly after her arrival in this country Mrs. Hayden was followed by another medium, Mrs. Roberts, and rappings and table-turnings became epidemic. For a minimum fee of half-a-guinea the raps could be heard and the turning table felt. There was no lack of visitors to the séances. Later

¹ Podmore: *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 197.

revelations made known the fate of the departed. As an example of this a Rev. Mr. Gillson, of Bath, in a work entitled *Table-Talking: Disclosures of Satanic Wonders and Prophetic Signs*, reports that after ascertaining that his interlocutor was a departed spirit, who expected in the course of ten years to be bound with Satan and all his crew and cast into the abyss, catechised him as follows:—

“I then asked: ‘Where are Satan’s headquarters? Are they in England?’ There was a slight movement.

“‘Are they in France?’ A violent movement.

“‘Are they in Spain?’ Similar agitation.

“‘Are they in Rome?’ The table seemed literally frantic.”¹

To turn to another and more important chapter in the book of the “new revelation”: 1855 brought to these shores a man famous in the annals of Spiritualism. “In David Dunglas Home,” or Hume, Mr. Podmore says, “and in his doings, all the problems of Spiritualism are posed in their acutest form: with the marvels wrought by him or through him, the main defences of Spiritualism must stand or fall.”²

Home, of Scottish birth and name, was taken, in 1842, when he was nine years old, by relatives to America. In his seventeenth year—two years after the Hydeville knockings, about which he may have heard—he came out as a medium, finding support in that profession from a group of spiritualists. They subscribed money to send him to England to

¹ Podmore: *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 14.

² *Ibid.* Vol. ii., p. 222.

recruit his energies and also to advance the cause. His credentials secured him welcome both in spiritualist circles and the houses of prominent people. From England he went abroad, finally reaching Russia, where he exhibited his powers before the Tsar. He returned in the autumn of 1859, bringing with him a Russian lady of noble birth and moderate fortune, whom he had married. Three years afterwards she died; Home was left "hard up" and lived by his wits till 1866, when he made the acquaintance of Mrs. Lyon, a widow lady, wealthy and childless. There was a singular charm about him, felt by all who met him, and it was this which won her heart and opened her purse strings. She voluntarily—at least he was not proved to have used undue influence upon her—gave him the handsome sum of £24,000, and promised more. In recognition of her generosity he double-barrelled his name as Home-Lyon. But soon afterwards the lady cooled and repented, and brought an action for restitution of the money, which she won, the court at the same time acquitting Home of what looked like unworthy behaviour. In 1871 he remarried, and again a Russian lady of fortune. After this he spent the greater part of each year on the Continent till his death in 1886. He is described as a man whose nerves were highly strung, lavish in love of his friends and of cheerful disposition, but vain to a degree, ever striving to be before the foot-lights. His skill as a pianist and his dramatic power as a reciter added to his social attractions. Trust in him was deepened by the impression of his belief in himself as possessed of supernatural powers which he

made on others, as well as by his orthodox attitude. In his trances he "habitually delivered discourses on religious themes and on communion with God and the angels." Mr. Podmore says that Home was never publicly exposed as an impostor, and there is no evidence of any weight that he was ever privately detected in trickery.¹ But, as will be seen later on, he always chose his own company or imposed his own conditions. Such, in brief outline, was the man. Now for his performances.

After the stock phenomena of raps, tilting tables, music from apparently untouched accordions and guitars, spirit voices and spirit lights, all in the usual "dim," if not "religious, light," Home would open the second act. I borrow Mr. Podmore's description:

"If the conditions were judged favourable to the higher manifestations, the lights would be turned out, the fire screened and the table drawn up to the window, the company sitting round three sides, leaving the side next the window vacant, with Home sitting at one end of the vacant space. Hands would then be seen, outlined against the faint light proceeding from the window, to rise over the vacant edge of the table, move about the paper lying on its surface or give flowers to the sitters. Afterwards the medium would be levitated."²

To Pope's question, "Shall gravitation cease if you go by?"³ America had given an affirmative answer before Home levitated. In 1851 a medium named Gordon was carried through the air a distance of sixty feet, "entirely by spiritual hands." More

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 230.

² *Ibid.* Vol. i., p. 232.

³ *Essay on Man*. Ep. IV. i. 128.

famous in the annals of this phenomenon is the case of Mrs. Guppy, a very heavy weight. At a séance at which, after recitation of the Lord's Prayer and sacred tunes from a musical box, the materialised spirit of Katie King appeared, one of the sitters said: "I wish she would bring Mrs. Guppy here"; whereupon a heavy bump on the table was heard, and on a match being lighted Mrs. Guppy was seen standing on the table, holding a housekeeping book, in which the last written item was "onions." She had been transported from her house in Highbury, three miles away. Her companion at home had last seen her making up her accounts; she suddenly disappeared, and the only trace she left was that of a slight haze near the ceiling. Her husband, with the coolness of the "well-conducted" Charlotte Werther,¹ remarked that no doubt she had been wafted away by the spirits and went to his supper. About the same time supernormal agencies carried "Dr." Monck, a professional medium, through the air from Bristol to Swindon. Later on, terrestrial agencies carried him to prison as a rogue and a vagabond.

To return to Home. The most graphic account of one of his earlier levitations was from the pen of Robert Bell, a prominent journalist of the time, and was published in *The Cornhill Magazine* of August, 1860. The article was entitled "Stranger than Fiction." To quote its essential parts: he describes

¹ "Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter."

THACKERAY: *Sorrows of Werther*.

the séance as taking place in a room in which all the lights had been put out, darkness being further ensured by the pulling down of the window blind by an invisible hand. The sitters felt their knees touched and their clothes pulled, also by invisible hands; soft music was heard from an accordion, and presently Home, who "was seated next the window, his head being dimly visible against the curtain, said in a quiet voice, 'My chair is moving—I am off the ground—don't notice me—talk of something else,' or words to that effect. . . . I was sitting," Mr. Bell adds, "nearly opposite to him and I saw his hands disappear from the table, and his head vanish into the deep shadow beyond. In a moment or two he spoke again. This time his voice was in the air above our heads. He had risen from his chair to a height of four or five feet from the ground. As he ascended higher he described his position, which at first was perpendicular, and afterwards became horizontal. . . . In a moment or two more he told us that he was going to pass across the window, against the grey silvery light of which he would be visible. We watched in profound silence, and saw his figure pass from one side of the window to the other, feet foremost, lying horizontally in the air. He spoke to us as he passed, and told us that he would return the reverse way and recross the window, which he did. . . . He hovered round the circle for several minutes and passed, this time perpendicularly, over our heads. I heard his voice behind me in the air and felt something lightly brush my chair. It was his foot, which he gave us leave to touch. I placed my hand gently upon it,

when he uttered a cry of pain, and the foot was withdrawn quickly, with a palpable shudder. He now passed over to the farthest extremity of the room, and we could judge by his voice of the altitude and distance he had attained. He had reached the ceiling, upon which he made a slight mark and soon afterwards descended and resumed his place at the table. An incident which occurred during this aerial passage, and imparted a strange solemnity, was that the accordion, which we supposed to be on the ground under the window close to us, played a strain of wild pathos in the air from the most distant corner of the room."

Attestation as to levitations of Home in the same year, and in 1868, 1871, and on other occasions, under conditions of wellnigh total darkness, in which the details, in the main, correspond with the above, were made by well-known men, among them Lord Lindsay, afterwards Earl of Crawford,¹ Viscount Adare, afterwards Earl of Dunraven, and most notable of all, by the distinguished physicist, Mr. (now Sir William) Crookes, who testified to two cases of levitation at which he was present. He says that at the second séance Home was seen to be sitting in the air, supported by nothing visible. Lord Lindsay—the only spectator of *this* phenomenon—testified to Home floating horizontally out of the room through a slightly opened window and returning feet foremost through another window.

The question asked by Jesus, "Which of you by

¹ He was subject to hallucinations of black dogs, figures of women and flames of fire on his knees, which, although the phenomena are wholly different, suggest caution in accepting his testimony to suspension of the law of gravitation.

taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"¹ may have provoked Home and other mediums to attempt to achieve that elongation by other means. There is a group of witnesses who depone to having seen this accomplished, and, as an exception to the usual conditions imposed by mediums, in candle-light. Among other witnesses to this is Lord Lindsay, who in his evidence before the Dialectical Society averred that he saw Home, when in the trance state, elongated eleven inches. On awaking he resumed his natural height. The degree of elongation varied from three inches to one reported case of eighteen inches.

Perhaps the most impressive of the feats exhibited by Home, which has attestation from Sir William Crookes and other witnesses of integrity, is the fire ordeal. Sir William tells how Home pulled lumps of red-hot coal, one at a time, out of the fire with his right hand, then folded a handkerchief, and putting his left hand into the fire took out a red-hot cinder and put it on the handkerchief, which remained unburnt. Sir William tells us that on another occasion Home "took a good-sized piece of red-hot coal from the fire, put it in his right hand, and carried it with the other hand." Then "he blew the small furnace thus extemporised till the lump was nearly at white heat, and drew my attention to the lambent flame which was flickering over the coal and licking round his fingers. He fell on his knees, looked up in a reverent manner, held up the coal and said: 'Is not God good? Are not His laws wonderful?'"

¹ Matthew vi. 27.

A presumably less qualified authority, Mrs. S. C. Hall, tells that she saw Home poke a large drawing-room fire, then draw from it with his hand a big lump of red-hot coal and after half-a-minute's pause put it on her husband's head. Asked, "Is it not hot?" he answered, "Warm, but not hot." Home drew Mr. Hall's white hair over the coal, which glowed red beneath it, and after a lapse of four or five minutes removed the coal. Two or three present "attempted to touch it, but it burnt their fingers. I said, 'Daniel, bring it to me,' and he placed it in my left hand. I felt it warm, yet when I stooped down to examine it, my face felt the heat so much that I was obliged to withdraw it." ¹

The same Mr. Hall, a well-known miscellaneous author, who died in 1889, relates that at a sitting with Home he saw the spirit of his dead sister. But the phenomenon of materialisation did not, apparently, play a large part in Home's séances. "It needs heaven-sent moments for this skill," and the spirits are coy. As laid down by an authority on the subject: "When strict conditions are imposed, even when united with harmony and good feeling, it is only in very rare instances that full-form manifestations take place." ²

Next in prominence to Home among the American mediums who, at intervals, came to England, were the Davenport Brothers, whose credentials, assuring them welcome, were strengthened by their being accompanied by a sort of chaplain, the Rev. J. B.

¹ *Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 178. By Lord Adare.

² *The Spiritualist*, 22nd December, 1876.

Ferguson, a "somewhat weak-headed" but guileless man and a sincere believer in the supernormal character of the performances of the Brothers. He had been converted as the result of attending a séance where, by the use of the rapping-alphabet, he had been put into communication with a deceased brother minister. It is difficult to attach importance to the phenomena of levitation, elongation and fire ordeal as manifestations of the activity of departed spirits: the ordinary man would, *prima facie*, expect evidence less gross in character. And the remark applies to the phenomenon exhibited by the Davenport Brothers, which consisted in sitting in dark cabinets and extricating themselves from ropes, which in their apparently effectual securing were adduced as the work of invisible hands, and which therefore defied unaided human skill to undo. However, the spirits, as Cowper says of the Deity,

"Move in a mysterious way,"
Their "wonders to perform."

The Brothers arrived in 1864 and remained here for about a year, when they went to the Continent, staying there till 1868. Of this more hereafter.

Among other well-accredited American mediums the most notable, since the Davenport Brothers, was Henry Slade. "Doctor," he dubbed himself, as an exception in the country whose male inhabitants, according to the late "Max O'Rell," are "mostly colonels." He came here in the summer of 1876. He is described as being of tall, lithe figure, dreamy-eyed, having a rather sad smile and a certain melancholy grace of manner, and as of highly wrought

nervous temperament.¹ His special line as a medium was in the receipt of communications from spirits written on double slates screwed or locked together. His sitters put questions orally, or in writing on slates, sometimes concealing the questions on folded slips of paper. Unlike the phenomena already described, these were produced in full light. The company were free to bring their own slates, mark them for identification, fasten them up, lay them on the table, each one keeping his or her eyes steadfastly on the medium. Mr. Podmore, whose sceptical attitude towards all spiritualistic phenomena never wavered during many years of investigation of them, was, he tells us, "profoundly impressed by the performance."² He was not alone. Eminent men of science witnessed the performances and, save in two notable instances, to be dealt with later on, confessed themselves baffled. So were professional conjurers, one of them confessing that he regarded it "as impossible to explain the occurrences by prestidigitation of any kind."³

Circumstances to be narrated in the next chapter compelled Slade to leave England hurriedly in the following year. He left an expert successor in one William Eglinton, a fellow-countryman, and co-worker with Madame Blavatsky. The spirit-writing on slates which he exhibited brought a crowd of witnesses testifying to the genuineness of these unique holographs, and the London Spiritual-

¹ Lucian thus describes the medium Alexander of Abonoteichos: "His eyes were piercing and suggested inspiration, his voice at once sweet and sonorous." (Fowler's trans. Vol. ii., p. 213.)

² *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 89.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 204.

ist Alliance set its hall-mark on them by inviting Eglinton to read a paper on the marvels. The following narrative is quoted as a typical example of his skill.

A Mr. Smith, to whose exceptionally acute powers of observation Mr. Podmore testified, and Mr. J. Murray Templeton, had a sitting with Eglinton. Expressing the desire of the two to get something written which could be regarded as outside the knowledge of the three, Mr. Smith took down a book haphazard from a shelf, put it on a chair and sat on it, while he and Mr. Templeton were arranging the page, line, and word to be asked for. This was decided by each taking some crayons and pencils by chance. One of them found that he had taken eighteen crayons, and the other that he had taken nine pencils. So they agreed that the "controls" should be asked to write the last word of line 18 on page 9 of the book. The book was produced and laid on one of the slates, both of which were held beneath the underneath of the table, the book being held firmly closed between the table and the slate. The three men talked, and in the midst of Mr. Eglinton's remarks the writing was heard to begin. He talked for about half-a-minute; the writing continued a few more seconds before the usual three raps came to denote its conclusion. The message on the slate was as follows:—"This is a Hungarian book of poems. The last word of page 18 (page 9, line 18) is bunhoseded." After the trio had observed that a mistake in the figures had been corrected in parenthesis, Mr. Smith opened the book at page 9 and found that the last word on line 18 of that page was

"bunhoseded." He regarded the test as crucial; "for," as he says, "it is difficult to believe that Mr. Eglinton can have committed to memory the exact position of every word in every book on his shelves—containing some two hundred books—or more."¹ As told by Mr. Templeton, the narrative differs. Were ever any two witnesses of the same occurrence in exact agreement? The test, he says, was proposed by Eglinton, the book was not chosen haphazard, and the page and line were fixed on by taking the actual totals of the crayons and pencils.

This by no means exhausts the list of American mediums whom the dwellers in Wonderland received with open arms. *Ex uno disce omnes*, and to recite their names and achievements would be only to use "vain repetitions." These can give place to the story of the wonders exhibited by a renowned home-made medium.

I refer to the Rev. Stainton Moses, from whose directions for the conduct of circles quotations have been given. To him the late Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace paid this tribute: "He was as remarkable a medium as D. D. Home, and during the last seventeen years of his life he kept accurate and systematic records of all the phenomena that occurred through his own psychic powers. He sat almost entirely with private friends, many of whom also kept notes of what occurred, and after a full examination of these independent records, Mr. Myers concludes that the various phenomena, many of which were of the most remarkable character, are

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., pp. 211, 212.

thoroughly well established.”¹ More cautiously, Sir Oliver Lodge says that Stainton Moses “wrote automatically, *i.e.* subconsciously, and felt that he was in touch with helpful and informing intelligences.”²

Son of the headmaster of the Grammar School at Donington, in Lincolnshire, Stainton Moses was born in 1839. He went up to Oxford in 1858 and took Holy Orders in 1863, but indifferent health and a “parson’s throat” compelled him to give up clerical work in 1870, when he came to London as tutor to a son of his friends, Dr. and Mrs. Stanhope Speers. They were Spiritualists, converted to the faith by the belief that they had seen the face of a dead relative at a séance where a Mrs. Holmes had acted as medium. Stainton Moses was a neurotic, therefore of highly susceptible temperament; and to this, fostered by sympathetic surroundings, and especially to the reading of books on spiritualism, notably R. Dale Owen’s *The Debateable Land*,³ may be traced the development of his powers as a medium, manifest in both physical and psychical phenomena. His reputed high, wellnigh saintly, character, and his unblemished career as cleric and schoolmaster, begot unwavering trust. Like Home,

¹ *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 102.

² *Raymond*, p. 350, and see his *Survival of Man*, pp. 94, 104.

³ This title is applicable to Mr. Owen’s statement that when he was at Naples, where he was American Minister, Home gave a sitting in his (Mr. Owen’s) house, when, three or four friends being present, a table and lamp weighing ninety-six pounds rose eight or ten inches from the floor and remained suspended in the air while one might count six or seven, the hands of all present being laid upon the table. This is cited by Dr. A. R. Wallace as one of “a few instances in which the evidence of preterhuman or spiritual beings is as good and definite as it is possible for any evidence of any fact to be.”—*Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 71 (Revised Edition, 1896).

he was never detected in any trickery. His mediumistic powers were revealed in 1872, when he became English master in University College School, a post which he held till 1889. He died in 1892 of a lingering disease, perhaps self-aggravated. Mr. Podmore says that "at the end of his life, during a period of extreme nervous prostration, he became a victim, like many other mediums, to the drink habit."¹ He was no professional, he asked no fee nor expected one from the select number, often only two, of old friends who were invited to his sésances. In a room where light was wholly excluded rapping-alphabets were in full swing—at one séance they indicated the presence of forty-nine spirits; the miscellaneous objects introduced ranged from gloves and pin-cushions to opera-glasses and Parian statuettes. Sprayed scents diffused fragrance; sometimes the liquid perfume was poured into the upturned hands of the sitters, "frequently it would be found oozing from the medium's head and running down, like the precious ointment of Aaron, to his beard."² Confirming an entry in Mrs. Speers' diary, Moses says that on one occasion he was levitated more than six feet. Dr. and Mrs. Speers averred that one evening a brilliant cross, its colours varying, appeared behind the medium's head,³ from which time spirit

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 288.

"There is certainly some evidence indicating that continual sittings for physical phenomena cause an illegitimate and excessive drain on the vitality of a medium, creating a nervous exhaustion which is apt to lead, in extreme cases, to mental derangement, or to an habitual resort to stimulants with a no less deplorable end."—*On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 261. By Sir W. F. Barrett.

² *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 278.

³ In Home's case a crystal ball emitting flashes of coloured light appeared.

lights were often seen, accompanied by spirit music. To Moses himself came not, as to his namesake on the Mount, "the glory of the Lord like devouring fire," but the voices of Swedenborg, Bishop Wilberforce and others departed, while nearly forty of the less famous among these sent messages proving their identity, through Imperator, the guiding "control"¹ who directed the medium's hand in spirit writing. These communications fill twenty-four notebooks, and contain not only autobiographical details, but homilies of the ordinary pulpit type, which can hardly be construed as forming part of any "new revelation." A quotation from one of them will serve as sample of the whole. Pitched in the triumphant note of "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee,"² it seems to herald the passing away of the old order and the advent of the new Spiritualism. "We tell you, friend, that the end draws nigh. It shall not be always so. As it was in the days which preceded the coming of the Son of Man; as it has been in the midnight hours which precede every day dream from on high, so it is now. The night of ignorance is fast passing away. The shackles which priestcraft has hung around struggling souls

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge explains that "the control or second personality which speaks during the trance appears to be more closely in touch with what is popularly spoken of as 'the next world' than with customary human existence, and accordingly is able to get messages through from people deceased, transmitting them through the speech or writing of the medium, usually with some obscurity and misunderstanding, and with mannerisms belonging either to the medium or to the control."—*Raymond*, p. 87.

The controls, as will be seen, form a miscellaneous company, ranging from philosophers to charwomen.

² Isaiah lx. 1.

shall be knocked off, and in place of fanatical folly and ignorant Pharisaism and misty speculation you shall have a reasonable religion and a divine faith. You shall have richer views of God, truer notions of your duty and destiny; you shall know that they whom you call dead are alive amongst you, living, as they lived on earth, only more really: ministering to you with undiminished love; animated in their unwearying intercourse with the same affection which they bore to you whilst they were yet incarnated." To this follow assurances on man's immortality. "Man never dies, cannot die, however he may wish it—in that great truth rests the key to the future."

In the year that Stainton Moses died interest gathered round a medium of different type, one Eusapia Palladino, an uneducated Neapolitan, to whom the late Dr. A. R. Wallace bore witness as follows:—

She "had been tested by numbers of men of science—Italian, German and French—all of whom became satisfied of the genuineness of the manifestations. The sittings took place in private houses belonging to Professor Charles Richet, a French physician, who has made a special study of mental diseases and of hypnotism, and under test conditions usually under Professor Lodge's personal supervision. The phenomena consisted of the motion of various objects at considerable distances from the medium, the appearance of hands and faces not those of any person present, musical sounds produced on an accordion and piano while no one was touching either instrument, a heavy

table turned completely over while untouched by anyone, various parts of the Professor's body touched or grasped as by invisible hands while the medium's hands were securely held, and lights like glow-worms flitting about the room. His conclusion was that these various phenomena were not produced by the medium in any normal way, and that they were not explicable as the result of any known physical causes."¹

The tests to which Eusapia was required to submit were numerous; they extend over nearly twenty years. They began in 1892 and were repeated in 1894, on the Ile Roubaud, near Hyères, when Professor Lodge vouched that the phenomena "were amply sufficient in themselves to establish a scientifically unrecognised truth." In 1895 Eusapia was brought to Cambridge, when, as will be told in the next chapter, doubts as to the genuineness of her manifestations were expressed, causing Professor Lodge materially to modify his previous judgment. In a letter dated 2d November, 1895, and printed in *Light*, he said: "Eusapia has shown that she employs artifice and deceives: so much is certain. She has just as certainly shown that she can cause genuine phenomena. That is my opinion." During the years 1905, 1906 and 1907 investigations into her mediumistic powers were carried on at forty-three sittings, some at Naples, some at Turin and the larger number at Paris, where M. and Madame Curie were members of the investigating body appointed by the Institut Général Psychologique. Following

¹ *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 104.

on this, a committee was appointed by the Society for Psychical Research in 1908, the sittings being held at Naples in the winter of that year. Finally, Eusapia went to America in November, 1909, and stayed there till June, 1910, during which period she gave between thirty and forty séances. These are described in detail by Mr. Hereward Carrington—who attended the larger number—in his *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*¹ (he had been present at the Naples séances).

It was remarked at the outset that the “new revelation,” following the processes of evolution (adapting itself, perchance, like an older revelation, to “the hardness of men’s hearts”), was gradual in the character of its manifestations. Some twelve years appear to have passed before the grosser physical phenomena at Hydeville and other places were followed by more ethereal phenomena in the materialised forms of the departed. This privilege was also first accorded to America.

The first record of that marvel dates from October, 1860. At a séance held by Robert Dale Owen, where Mrs. Underhill (a married daughter of the Foxs) was the medium, a veiled and luminous female figure appeared and walked about the room. Later on Kate Fox (heroine of the Hydeville story) gave sittings to a disconsolate widower, a Mr. Livermore, of New York, and was able to assuage his grief by invoking a figure in whom he recognised his dead wife. But he was not permitted to approach her. By the powers of the same medium, materialised spirits outside family groups appeared.

¹ Part II. (T. Werner Laurie.)

Among these was Benjamin Franklin. But it was not till January, 1872, that the proselytes "without the gate" had these celestial visions vouchsafed to them. Mrs. Guppy, famous in the annals of levitation, was the first to achieve distinction among us in successfully "calling spirits from the vasty deep"—or height. At a séance at her house, where a sister medium was present, a face "white as alabaster" appeared at an upper opening in the cabinet: at a séance held by two mediums, Herne and Williams, three weeks later the number of spirit shapes grew apace. They were rendered visible in the semi-darkness by luminous smoke or vapour, accompanied by a faint smell of phosphorus—not sulphur! A similar smell was emitted at a séance given by the first Mrs. Guppy some years earlier, and notably, on another occasion, when spirit lights appeared at a séance given by Mr. Stainton Moses to his friends the Speers. Herne and Williams were eclipsed by other mediums, among them a Miss Showers, of Teignmouth, a girl of sixteen. At her séance the old and the new phenomena met together. Saucepans jumped off the fire, dish-covers leapt to the bell wires, ottomans and flower-pots flew about, and a table started running across the room. In the midst of this wantonness one of the company recognised the materialised spirit of the notorious John King (he was, when in the flesh, the buccaneer Morgan) and of one Peter sitting on the sofa. This was accomplished through the mediumship of Ellen, the servant, to whom the considerate Peter prescribed a good supper, wine included. This may be

paralleled by the incident at a Maori séance, when the spirit of a deceased chief spoke through the priest medium, who was sitting in the darkest corner of the house. The spirit assured his "sister" that all was well with him, and added: "Give my large pig to the priest."¹ Among the Samoans "the priest generally managed to make the god say what he wished him to say, or to make demands for something which the priest himself wished to possess."²

An important witness now appears on the scene to dispel any doubts which had been felt by some as to whether the medium and the spirit are not one and the same person. At séances held at his own house in May, 1874, where a girl named Florence Cook, then in her sixteenth year, was the medium, Sir William (then Mr.) Crookes, averred that he had seen the materialised spirit of Katie King, daughter of the above named John King, of whom—*i.e.* of Katie—it was arranged that photographs should be taken. This is Sir William's testimony:

"I frequently drew the curtain on one side when Katie was standing near, and it was a common thing for the seven or eight of us to see Miss Cook and Katie at the same time under the full blaze of the electric light. We did not on these occasions actually see the face of the medium, because of the shawl, but we saw her hands and feet. [Miss Cook was lying on the floor, with her face muffled in a shawl.] We saw her move uneasily under the in-

¹ Quoted from "Old New Zealand" in *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 42. By Andrew Lang.

² *Melanesians and Polynesians*, p. 224. By George Brown, D.D.

fluence of the intense light and we heard her moan occasionally. I have one photograph of the two together, but Katie is seated in front of Miss Cook's head. At a later séance, held in Miss Cook's bedroom, which had been transformed into a dark cabinet, Sir William was privileged to be present behind the curtain at the farewell meeting between Miss Cook and Katie, and saw and heard the two figures conversing together for several minutes."¹ Such is the evidence given by that distinguished savant as to the temporary return of the departed from the realm of spirits.

In his *Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism* Sir William refers to the sensation of a "peculiar cold air, sometimes amounting to a decided wind" . . . a cold so intense that he could compare it only "to that felt when the hand has been within a few inches of frozen mercury,"² which frequently precedes the manifestation of the figures. Mr. Edward Carpenter suggests that this may be due "in part at any rate to a condensation of water-vapour on the accreting particles of the spirit body."³ The intimate connection in barbaric thought between wind and spirit was referred to in the introductory chapter. As the Maori of New Zealand heard in the wind the signs of the presence of their god, so does the spiritualist find proof of the presence of the departed in the "decided wind" to which Sir William testifies.

Speaking of spirit photographs, Dr. Wallace ex-

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 155.

² P. 86.

³ *Drama of Love and Death*, p. 203.

presses his satisfaction "that whatever marvels occur in America can be reproduced here," and he cites examples of "clearly recognisable likeness of deceased friends having been obtained."¹ Among those possessing exceptional interest is that of the late William Howitt's "two sons, many years dead, the likenesses to whom were instantly recognised by the parents as 'perfect and unmistakable.'" The interest for spiritualists lies in the light which that photograph throws on the debatable question whether the spirits remain at the stage of development when they depart, or, as in the case of babies dying immediately after their birth, of non-development.

As bearing on this, at an exhibition of spirit photographs at the Spiritualists' Hall, Chiswick, in the spring of 1904, Mr. Blackall "stated that his subjects are able to give sittings for any period of their earthly existence, just as when our thoughts can now run over the past periods of our lives." Among the spirits photographed as peering over Mr. Blackall's shoulder were those of Browning, Tennyson, Longfellow, Charles Dickens, Huxley, Darwin and Napoleon. It was regrettable to hear him add that only one photographer in England was able to take the portraits and that "he has now retired from business." "The exhibition," says the reporter of the interview with Mr. Blackall, "is unique."² None of us can contradict that.

Speaking of the "photography of the cloud figures (some of them very definite in outline) which are found to emanate on occasions from mediums

¹ *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 196.

² *Daily Chronicle*, 19th March, 1904.

in the state of trance," Mr. Edward Carpenter says: "Notwithstanding the doubt which has commonly been cast on all such photographs, and notwithstanding the very obvious ease with which cameras *can* be manipulated and shadow figures of some kind fraudulently produced, the evidence for the genuineness of some such 'spirit' photographs is—to anyone who really studies it—beyond question. . . . The evidence is so abundant and, on the whole, so well confirmed that we are practically now compelled to admit (and this is the point in hand) that cloud-like forms of human outline emanating from a medium or other person's body may at times be caught by the photographic plate. . . . That these forms, occurring and occasionally photographed in connection with mediums, are 'independent spirits' or souls, is, of course, in no way assured. They may be such or (what seems more likely) they may be simply extensions of the spiritual or inner body of the medium."¹ In his little book on *Psychical Research* Sir W. F. Barrett makes no reference to the matter. Sir Oliver Lodge leaves it an open question, but his leanings are obvious. "The question of photography applied to visible phantasms, and to an invisible variety [can any rational explanation of these words be supplied?] said to be perceived by clairvoyants, is still an open one—at any rate no photographic evidence has yet appeared conclusive to me. If successful, photography could prove that the impression was not only a mental one, but that the ether of space had been definitely affected in a certain way also, so that the

¹ *Drama of Love and Death*, pp. 186, 187.

impression had probably become received by the optical apparatus of the eye, and had been transmitted in the usual way to the brain.”¹ On a later page this elusive writer, whose confusion of thought is manifest in the obscurity of his language, says: “The fact that a photograph can be clearly recognised when the medium has only seen the person clairvoyantly, on the other side of the veil, is suggestive, since it seems to show that the general appearance is preserved—or, in other words, that each human body is a true representation of personality.”²

At this time of day it may seem as the sending of “owls to Athens” to discourse to intelligent readers on Apparitions and Haunted Houses. But when, as in Sir W. F. Barrett’s *Psychical Research*, cases of apparition are discussed as having “high evidential value,”³ when they are referred to in Sir Oliver Lodge’s *Survival of Man* as possibly not “purely subjective, belonging to what are sometimes spoken of as incipient materialisation”⁴; and when Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace devotes a long chapter of his *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism* to prove their objectivity; discussion of the subject here has warrant.

Professor Davenport says that “there is in the average man a great slumbering mass of fear that he cannot shake off, made up of instincts and feelings inherited from a long human and animal past.”⁵ The animal, the child, and the ignorant, and there-

¹ *Survival of Man*, p. 77 (1915 edition).

² *Survival of Man*, p. 220.

³ P. 120.

⁴ P. 83.

⁵ *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, p. 224.

fore the superstitious, alike tremble before the unknown and the unusual; they fear, but know not what they fear. Ignorance is the mother of mystery, and the mysterious remains the dreaded. "Fear, in sooth," says Lucretius, "takes such a hold of all mortals, because they see so many operations go on in earth and heaven, the courses of which they can in no way understand."¹ This has supplement in Hobbes' *Leviathan*: "This feare of things invisible is the naturall Seed of that which every one in himself calleth Religion; and in them that worship, or feare the Power otherwise than they do, Superstition."²

Hence the mental state of both the savage and the illiterate is one of nervous instability. "A gust of contrarie wind, the croaking of a flight of Ravens, the false pace of a Horse, the casual flight of an Eagle, a dreame, a sodain voice, a false sign, are enough to overthrow, sufficient to overwhelme, and able to pull him to the ground."³ The flimsiest report of the appearance of a ghost anywhere will draw thousands to the spot; presumably intelligent persons will write to the newspapers asserting their belief in the existence of these troublers of households. When rumours of a haunted house in Ballachin were spread abroad a few years ago, the Society for Psychical Research deemed them of sufficient importance to make investigations on the spot, and a correspondent who slept in the house wrote thus to *The Times*: "Of one thing I am certain—that is, that there is something super-

¹ *De Rerum Natura*. Book I., pp. 151-154.

² Part I., chapter xi. "Of Man."

³ *Essays*. By Montaigne. Book II., chapter xii. (Florio's trans.)

natural in the noises and things that I heard and experienced there.”¹

At a reputed haunted house in Oxfordshire, all the inmates avoided a room whence issued at night “weird music, now sweet and soft and lovely as a dream, then swelling into weird confusion, and then dying away in long-drawn moans of infinite distress.” When a carpenter at last was sent for he found a perfect plexus of bell wires underneath the floor of the haunted chamber. “When doors and windows were all closed, and everything was still at night, the wind, finding its way in by what channel it could, turned this labyrinth of wires into an æolian harp, whence issued the mysterious sounds by which successive families had been scared.”²

Some time back (I omitted to note the date) it was stated in a paper called *Health* that above one thousand houses in London are tenantless because they are believed to be haunted. Imitating the precision of the Dublin lawyer who, challenging his opponent to a duel, and fixing the meeting in Phoenix Park, added, “in the Fifteen Acres, be the same more or less,” I may say that the exact number of houses in the area ruled by the London County Council is given in its last “Statistical Report (1911)” as 606,271. This provides, as nearly as can be, one ghost to every six hundred dwellings; and, as that supply doubtless exceeds the demand, it is not well to hamper the result by adding the number of skeletons producible from the cupboards of the 606,271 houses.

¹ *Times*, 8th and 10th June, 1897.

² *Times*, 25th August, 1897.

More than three centuries ago Reginald Scot, bravely and perilously attacking superstitions in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, asked in triumphant tones: "Where are the soules that swarmed in times past? Where are the spirits? Who heareth their noises? Who seeth their visions? . . . Where be the spirits that wandered to have buriall for their bodies?"¹

Where, indeed? Why, everywhere, in the belief of physicists, as well as of peasants, some of the physicists even contending when a medium is exposed that, despite the detection of the sorry trickery, there is a residuum of phenomena which points to the action of supernatural agents. *Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.*

The list is a long one, stretching far back. Numberless bells have been rung; mountains of crockery smashed; cartloads of missiles hurled; hundreds upon hundreds of people frightened out of their wits, and thousands upon thousands cheated of their sleep, through the assumed activities of the crowd of semi-incarnates. The literature of the subject, whether treated seriously or to entertain, is enormous. Certain stories stand out from the rest, as, for example, that of the Drummer of Tedworth, who came with a "blooming noisome smell," used the rapping-alphabet, banged on his big drum and terrorised Mr. Mompesson and his children in revenge of his arrest and sentence to transportation. More famous than he is the ghost of "Old Jeffery," who harried the Wesley household at Epworth with "groans, squeaks, tinglings and knockings," and who was not to be scared away by the Reverend

¹ P. 390, in 1886 reprint of 1584 edition.

Samuel Wesley's purchase of a mastiff. Later in arrival was the Cock Lane Ghost, whose story, as a type of others of its kind, bears telling in more detail.

The materials for our knowledge of this legend are: 1. A pamphlet entitled *The Mystery Revealed: Containing a Series of Transactions and Authentic Testimonials respecting the supposed Cock Lane Ghost*, the authorship of which has been attributed to Goldsmith. As to this the British Museum Catalogue is silent. 2. *The Annual Register*, pp. 142-46. 3. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, XXXII., pp. 44, 81, 82. Each of these is of the year 1762. There is also in the British Museum Catalogue an entry: "*Cock Lane Humbug*, a Song. London, 1762. A slip fol."

Briefly told, this is the story. In 1756 Mr. Kent, a Norfolk man, lost his wife, and her sister Fanny came to him as housekeeper. Like Matthew Arnold's typical Nonconformist, he had "an eye on his deceased wife's sister," and she returned the glance. Mrs. Kent had died in child-bed, but as the baby lived, although only for a few minutes after its birth, the canon law, according to the author of *The Mystery Revealed*, forbade the marriage of the widower with his sister-in-law. From her he fled to London, but there she followed him, first by letters and then in person, the result being that "they thought it, *in foro conscientiae*, no crime to indulge their mutual passion." After one or two shifts they settled in lodgings in Cock Lane, in the house of one Parsons, clerk of St. Sepulchre's, Holborn. Kent, having to go into the country, left Fanny alone, whereupon she asked Parsons's daughter Elizabeth

to sleep with her. At night strange scratchings and rappings broke Fanny's rest, the more so as she interpreted these as monitions of her death. Of these we hear no more after Kent's return. After a time, as the result of a squabble between lodger and landlord over money lent to the latter, Kent removed to Bartlet's Court, Clerkenwell, where, in February, 1760, Fanny, being then with child, died of small-pox and was buried in the vault of St. John's Church. During 1761 and the earlier part of 1762 the noises that had disturbed poor Fanny's sleep were renewed in Parsons's house. They seemed to come from Elizabeth Parsons's bed, the girl herself being "always affected with tremblings and shiverings at the coming and going of the ghost," and feeling "the spirit like a mouse upon her back." The ghost itself appeared to some as a "shrouded, headless figure." The report of the apparition spread like wildfire through the town and brought crowds to Cock Lane.

Under date of 29th January, 1762, Horace Walpole writes to Sir Horace Mann: "We are again dipped into an egregious scene of folly. The reigning fashion is a ghost—a ghost that would not pass muster in the paltriest convent in the Apennines. It only knocks and scratches; does not pretend to appear or speak. The clergy give it their benediction, and all the world, whether believers or infidels, go to hear it. I, in which number you may guess, go to-morrow, for it is as much the mode to visit the ghost as the Prince of Mecklenburg, who is just arrived."¹

¹ *Letters*. Vol. iii., p. 479 (Toynbee's edition).

The result of Walpole's visit is told in a letter to George Montagu within four days after that to Mann: "I could send you volumes on the ghost. . . . A drunken parish clerk set it on foot out of revenge; the Methodists have adopted it, and the whole town of London think of nothing else. . . . I went to hear it, for it is not an *apparition*, but an *audition*. The Duke of York, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, Lord Hertford and I, all in one hackney coach. It rained torrents, yet the lane was full of mob, and the house so full we couldn't get in. At last they discovered it was the Duke of York, and the company squeezed themselves into one another's pockets to make room for us. The house, which is borrowed, and to which the ghost has adjourned, is wretchedly small and miserable; when we opened the chamber, in which were fifty people, with no light but one tallow candle at the end, we tumbled over the bed of the child to whom the ghost comes, and whom they are murdering by inches in such insufferable heat and stench. At the top of the room are ropes to dry clothes. I asked if we were to have rope-dancing between the acts. We had nothing. They told us, as they would at a puppet show, that it would not come that night till seven in the morning—that is, when there are only 'prentices and old women. We stayed, however, till half-an-hour after one. The Methodists have promised them contributions; provisions are sent in like forage, and all the taverns and ale-houses in the neighbourhood make fortunes. The most diverting part is to hear people wondering *when it will be found out*—as if there was anything

to find out; as if the actors would make their noises when they can be discovered. However, as this pantomime cannot last much longer, I hope Lady Fanny Shirley will set up a ghost of her own at Twickenham, and then you shall hear one.”¹

A Mr. Brown and Mary Frazer, the girl's nurse, asked the ghost to answer questions in the way approved by ghosts generally—namely, one knock for “Yes” and two knocks for “No”—the result being that the spirit, who was none other than Fanny herself, declared that Kent had “poisoned her by putting arsenic in purl² and administering it to her when ill of the small-pox.” The spirit properly added that she hoped to see Kent hanged. The medium, as she would be called nowadays, was taken to other houses, with varying result; and at last a movement towards strict investigation of the phenomena was set on foot, Parsons reluctantly consenting to the girl's removal to the house of the Rev. Mr. Aldrich, a clergyman of Clerkenwell, where there assembled “many gentlemen eminent for their rank and character,” among them being Dr. Johnson.

The girl was put to bed by some ladies; all avenues against fraud or collusion were blocked; the company watched her for above an hour and nothing happened. Then the men went downstairs, but soon after were summoned by the ladies, who reported that the scratchings and rappings had begun. The girl was then bidden to put her hands outside the bed, when the noises ceased. The

¹ *Letters*. Vol. iii., pp. 381, 382.

² Malt liquor medicated with wormwood or aromatic herbs.

verdict thus far arrived at is set down, presumably by Dr. Johnson, in *The Gentleman's Magazine*. After reciting the occurrence, he says: "It is, therefore, the opinion of the whole assembly that the child has some art of making or counterfeiting a particular noise, and that there is no agency of any higher cause." To this there is appended, probably by "Sylvanus Urban," the following note, printed in italics:—

"This account was drawn up by a gentleman of veracity and learning, and therefore we have thought it sufficient, though the imposture has been since more clearly detected even to demonstration" (XXXII., p. 81).

There had been a fruitless visit to the vault of St. John's, because the spirit of Fanny had promised to rap on her coffin, and the next day the girl Parsons was threatened with committal to Newgate if, under the checks imposed, the noises were not resumed. Thereupon she hid a board about six inches long "under her stays," and so produced the noises; but both she and the company assembled agreed that "these had not the least likeness to the former noises." Denying trickery, she was "searched, and caught in the lie." But there was "concurrent opinion that the child had been frightened by threats into this attempt," so that the mystery of the original scratchings and rappings remained unsolved. In the sequel Parsons and some accomplices were tried at the Guildhall for, as Horace Walpole hints in the letter already quoted, "conspiring against the life and character of Mr. Kent in making the girl the medium of the

slander that he had poisoned Fanny." Parsons was sentenced to stand in the pillory three times and then to two years' imprisonment; his wife to one year's imprisonment; while the others escaped by paying a fine of between £500 and £600 to Mr. Kent. Elizabeth Parsons, dupe or minx, or perhaps a mixture of both, vanishes into space.

Sixteen years afterwards a profligate parson, Cornelius Ford, a cousin of Dr. Johnson's, died at the Hummums Hotel (Arabic *hamman*=hot bath), Covent Garden. A waiter there, who was absent at the time, and not having heard of Ford's death, going down to the cellar on his return, met him, not once only, but afterwards. He reported this to his master, and asked him what business Ford had there, when he was told of his death. The shock brought on a fever. On his recovery he said that he had a message from Ford to deliver to some women, but he was not to tell what it was or to whom it was given. He walked out and was followed, but somewhere about St. Paul's the trackers lost him. He came back and said that he had delivered the message. The effect of this was to frighten the hotel servants. When Johnson heard the story he said: "The man had a fever, and this vision may have been the beginning of it."¹ This was a shrewd comment from a man who was no sceptic, to be paralleled by the following passage from Bishop Burnet's "Autobiography" (appended to Miss H. C. Foxcraft's *Supplement to Burnet's History of My Own Time*):

¹ Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Vol. iii., p. 349 (Birkbeck Hill's edition).

"The Countess of Belcarras, with whom I had lived in great friendship for many years, sent for me to come to her in all hast. When I came she told me her daughter had fitts of a strange nature, in which she lay waking, but knew nobody; she spoke all the while like one in heaven, as if she had been conversing with God and the holy angels. . . . She was then about eighteen, and was an extraordinary person in all respects. I apprehended there was something belonging to her sexe in the case, so I advised her mother to send for a physician. He set nature right, and she had no more fitts. I had heard of other instances of this sort, but never knew any besides this; in it I saw how nuns, by their state of life, might be subject to such fitts, so stories of that sort among them are not all to be rejected as fictions, nor to be entertained as things supernaturall" (p. 474).

Given a healthy condition of mind and body, there is no room for phantasms of either the living or the dead. The causes which beget them are explained and their doom is certain.

Gradually there is being brought about the inclusion, within the realm of unbroken order, of the great mass of phenomena once regarded as due to supernatural causes, both good and baleful. What yet remains without is there because of the strength of prejudice and ignorance, or because the evidence for its incorporation is incomplete. As to the ultimate issue there can be no doubt. The disunion which human misconception has assumed, giving us nature and supernature, will vanish when the full light of knowledge is cast upon it. For the kingdom of superstition is the kingdom of darkness. As Dowlas, the farrier in *Silas Marner*, says: "If ghos'es want me to believe in 'em, let 'em leave off skulking i' the dark and i' lone places—let 'em come where there's company and candles."

Thirty years ago, upon reviewing Myers, Gurney and Podmore's *Phantasms of the Living* in *The Pall*

Mall Gazette, Mr. G. Bernard Shaw wrote: "It is useless to mince matters in dealing with ghost stories—the existence of a liar is more probable than the existence of a ghost." Upon reading this, my wife said that it recalled to her memory a case of wilful self-deception which came within her experience when she was a student at a horticultural college. This is her story: "The rear of the building had originally formed part of a Queen Anne mansion, and the additions to it were of a character irregular enough to supply shelter to any lurking ghost; hence there was the usual legend of a grey lady said to be the spirit of a murdered nun, which haunted the house, and sometimes swept along the corridors. The story gathered credence from the superstitious because the college house-keeper said that she had heard taps and foot-steps.

"The need to be up betimes to work in the garden led to a rule that the students must be in their rooms not later than 10 P.M. However, one night I stayed reading in a fellow-student's room till twelve-thirty. To get to my room I had to pass one occupied by a senior member of the staff. I had got barely three yards past it when the door was opened suddenly and the occupant looked out, so I put on the pace to reach my room. I expected trouble the next morning, a summons and reprimand, but nothing happened. Then I heard that the lady had had a terrible fright in the night: she had seen the ghost! So I went to her at once to disabuse her mind, telling her that I was the ghost, but instead of censure for thus frightening

her, my explanation was received with scorn, and I was dismissed with the remark: 'Well, if it *was* you last night, you can't account for my experience on other nights when you did not pass my door.' "

II

EXPLANATORY

"When men have once acquiesced in untrue opinions and registered them as authentic records in their minds, it is no less impossible to speak intelligently to such men as to write legibly on a paper already scribbled over."—HOBBS: *Leviathan*.

IT was shown at the outset that the soul-idea has remained fundamentally the same through every stage of culture. And there is equally cogent evidence that in their conceptions of the behaviour of discarnate spirits the savage and the spiritualist are one. It cannot be otherwise.

"Vain questions! from the first
Put, and no answer found.
He binds us with the chain
Wherewith himself is bound.
From west to east the earth
Unrolls her primal curve;
The sun himself were vexed
Did she one furlong swerve;
The myriad years have whirled her hither,
But tell not of the whence or whither."¹

The spiritualist affirms that the quest is not in vain; that certain groups of phenomena give us assurance of the whither. The physical and the psychical in these phenomena remain mixed: some of the more repellent features appear only sporadic-

¹ F. T. Palgrave. *The Reign of Law*.

ally, others, such as raps and table-tilting, are still credentials of the "new revelation." One has to "possess the soul in patience" in the effort to take seriously the stories of the Puck-like antics and dare-deviltry of poltergeists when these are claimed to be part of the evidence of a spiritual world. In his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, published in 1584, Reginald Scot tells in his day of the "jocund and facetious spirits who sport themselves in the night by tumbling and fooling with Servants and Shepherds in Country Houses, pinching them black and blue."¹ Among the Chukchee tribes of Siberia "sometimes the spirits are very mischievous. In the movable tents of the Reindeer people an invisible hand will sometimes turn everything upside down and throw different objects about."²

The table played an important part in the Raymond communications. It tilted as the letter of the alphabet is spoken by the medium, stopping when a right letter is reached and tilting three times to indicate "Yes" and once to indicate "No." Its wonderful properties are thus gravely vouched for by Sir Oliver Lodge. "For the time it is animated—somewhat perhaps as a violin or piano is animated by a skilled musician and schooled to his will—and the dramatic action thus attained is *very remarkable*. [The italics are mine.] It can exhibit hesitation; it can exhibit certainty; it can seek for information; it can convey it; it can apparently ponder before giving a reply; it can welcome a new-comer; it can indicate joy or sorrow, fun or

¹ P. 510 (1886, reprint).

² *Aboriginal Siberia*, p. 232. By M. A. Czaplicka.

gravity; and most notable of all, it can exhibit affection in an unmistakable manner.”¹ In evidence of this it is reported that at one of the sittings “the table seemed to wish to get into Lady Lodge’s lap and made most caressing movements to and fro, and seemed as if it could not get close enough to her.”²

’Tis an old, old story. In 1853 Père Arnaud describes a séance with the Nasquape Indians: “The conjurers shut themselves up in a little lodge [*i.e.* the medium’s “cabinet”], and remain for a few minutes in a pensive attitude, cross-legged. Soon the lodge begins to move like a table turning, and replies by bounds and jumps to the questions put to the inquirer.”³

In the Solomon Islands, when the question arises whether or no a fleet of canoes shall put to sea, a *mane kisu* or wizard is consulted. “He declares that he has felt a *tindalo* [deceased spirit] come on board one of the canoes, because ‘one side of it has been pressed down.’ He therefore asks the question: ‘Shall we go? Shall we go there?’ If the canoe rocks, the answer is in the affirmative, if it lies steady, in the negative.”⁴ Among the same people, when a man falls sick, he sends for the medicine-man to find out “what *tindalo* is eating him.” The medicine-man brings an assistant, and holding a bamboo between them, the wizard slaps the end which he holds, calls one after another the

¹ *Raymond*, p. 363.

² *Ibid.*, p. 221.

³ Hind’s *Exploration of the Labrador Peninsula*. Vol. ii., p. 162 (1863).

⁴ Codrington’s *Melanesians*, p. 210.

names of dead men: when he names the one who is afflicting the sick man the bamboo becomes violently agitated. The Manganja believed that their medicine-men could impart power to anything and employed one of them to detect the stealer of some corn. So in the presence of the assembled natives he took two sticks, which, after fantastic gestures and gibberish, he handed to four young men, two holding each stick; he then gave a zebra tail and a calabash rattle to a young man and a boy. Then he rolled on the ground, muttering incantations: the bearers of the tail and the rattle danced round the stick-holders, who after a time had spasmodic twitchings of the limbs, foamed at the mouth and behaved as if demon-possessed. But the popular belief was that the sticks were possessed and through them the men, whom they "whirled and dragged through bush and thorny shrubs till they were torn and bleeding. At last they came back to the assembly, whirled round again and rushed down the path, to fall panting and exhausted in the hut of one of the chief's wives, the sticks rolling to her very feet, thus denouncing her as the thief. She denied it, but the medicine-man said: 'The spirit has declared her guilty; the spirit never lies.' " A story, dating from 1719, of self-moving objects is told in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*.¹ "A Russian merchant in Tibet, who had lost some goods, complained to the Kutuchtu Lama, who thereupon ordered one of the Lamas to take a four-footed bench which, after being turned by him in several directions, pointed to the tent where the goods were

¹ Vol. ii., p. 156 (1891 edition).

hidden. He then mounted astride the bench and it carried him to the tent where the stolen things were discovered." A similar story, also from Tibet, is told of a Lama finding stolen objects by the help of a table which flew forty feet, spun round, and fell on the earth, the direction in which it fell indicating where the things would be found.

As for raps, the same authority cites examples from travel books showing that the modern Dyaks, Siamese, Singalese and Esths alike believe that rappings are caused by spirits.¹ "Suppose," he adds, "a wild North American Indian looking on at a spirit séance in London. As to the presence of disembodied spirits, manifesting themselves by raps, noises, voices and other physical actions, the savage would be perfectly at home in the proceedings, for such things are part and parcel of his recognised system of nature. The part of the affair really strange to him would be the introduction of such acts as spelling and writing, which do belong to a different civilisation from his."²

The Russian peasant sets aside a portion of his supper for the Domovoy, or house spirit, who, if neglected, waxes wroth and knocks the table and benches about at night.³ Franconian damsels go to a tree on St. Thomas's Day and knock three times on it to find out by the answer given by the rappings of the tree spirit who is to be their husband. In Wales there is a species called knockers, who were said to point out the rich veins of silver and lead.

¹ *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 145.

² *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 156.

³ Ralston's *Songs of the Russian People*, p. 123.

Grose, in his correspondence with Baxter, describes the miners of the Island of Lewis as little statured and about half-a-yard long, and adds "that at this very instant there are miners on a discovery of a vein of metal on his own lands, and that two of them are ready to make oath they have heard these knockers in the daytime."¹

The rapping-alphabet² is no modern device of the spirits. Anent this, Reginald Scot tells a story in his *Discoverie of Witchcraft*. He precedes it by "citing one conjuration (of which sort I might cite a hundred) published by *Jacobus de Chusa*, a great doctor of the Romish Church, which serveth to find out the cause of noise and spiritual rumbling in houses, churches, or chappels and to conjure walking spirits . . . if the spirit make anie sound of voice or knocking . . . he is the conjurer." Then follows a series of questions to be put to him. "This must be doone in the night. . . . But that in truth such things are commonlie put in practice I will here set down an instance latelie and trulie, but lewdlie performed."³

On the death of the wife of the Mayor of Orleans, in 1534, her husband ordered that she should be buried without "anie pompe or noise," whereby Franciscan monks were deprived of their customary extortions. So they plotted with one Coliman, a conjurer, as to means of revenge by which they might frighten the Mayor into the belief "that his wife was damned for ever." They brought into the

¹ Brand's *Pop. Antiquities*. Vol. iii., p. 25. (Ed. Hazlitt.)

² In his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, vol. ii., p. 159, Prince Kropotkin describes the knocking-alphabet by which the prisoners in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul communicated.

³ Pp. 366-368.

plot a novice, whom they hid "over the arches of the church to make a great rumbling about midnight when they came to mumble their praiers as they were woont to do." This done, they asked some of the citizens, not including the Mayor, to attend "at mattens," and when these had arrived "the counterfeit spirit began to make a marvellous noise in the top of the church." Thereupon the monks asked him to make known "by signes to certeine things they would demand of him. Now there was a hole in the vawt through the which he might hear Coliman's voice, and then had he in his hand a little boord which, at everie question, he strake." They asked him several questions; "at the last they name the Maior's wife and there by and by the spirit gave a signe that he was her soul. He was further asked whether he were damned or no, and if he were, for what cause." Then followed a string of questions, which he "affirmed or denied according as he strake the boord twice or thrice together." Twice he struck the board to the leading question, when the congregation dispersed after a request from the monks "that they would beare witnesse of those things which they had seene with their eies." The story came to the bishop's ears and he required the monks to choose some of their number "to go up into the top of the vawt and there to see whether any ghost appeered or not," but their leader objected, "affirming that the spirit in no wise ought to be troubled." Meanwhile the Mayor, who saw through the trick, appealed to the king, who had the rascals brought to Paris. In vain they "vaunted themselves on their privileges"—benefit of clergy—they

were condemned to imprisonment in Orleans "to be brought forth into the cheefe church of the citie and from thence to the place of execution."

The Fox girls—appropriate name for these cunning hussies—were detected in February, 1851, three years after the Hydeville performances, by three professors in the University of Buffalo, all medical men, as producing the raps by knocking their knee-joints together. In their report they add: "We have heard of a person who can develop knockings from the ankle, of several who can produce noises with the joints of the toes and fingers, of one who can render loudly audible the shoulder, and another the hip joint. We have also heard of two additional cases in which sounds are produced by the knee-joint." Confessions from the Fox girls and other mediums followed in April. They showed a relative, Mrs. Norman Culver, how to produce the raps, in which she said that she soon found herself an expert. All the toes were used. When a committee at Rochester tested her genuineness by holding Katie Fox's ankles, the raps still went on. She was in collusion with the servant, who rapped with her knuckles under the floor from the cellar.¹

As for the Stratford disturbances, the report on them is practically valueless, because it was not set down by a son of Dr. Phelps's till *thirty years later*, and then at second hand, since he was no witness

¹ In his reference to the Fox girls (see *ante*, p. 36) Mr. Sinnett disingenuously makes no reference to this admission, perhaps because they appear to have recanted. He and those who share his amazing gullibility must reconcile this, as best they can, with the deposition which was made by Mrs. Norman Culver before a magistrate in April, 1851.

of what he affirms happened. The testimony of Andrew Jackson Davis to their genuineness as the eager efforts of spirits to hold communion with that particular family has been cited. But he was careful to qualify this by suggesting as a possible explanation that "the spirits had employed some impressible person in the family to write some of the communications and also to arrange the expressive tableaux." For "impressible" the term "irrepressible" may more truly explain the cause of the phenomena, since Dr. Phelps's son, Harry, was so plagued by "spirits" at his school that he was sent back to his reverend father, when there were no more happenings of outgrowths of mystically inscribed turnips from carpets, or waltzings of fire-irons. Candour must add that Davis himself had a somewhat shady record—"the badge of all his tribe"—despite his being an honoured recipient of communications which contain such revealed nonsense as descriptions of "systems moving in concentric circles round a Great Eternal Centre pregnated with the immutable eternal essence of Divine Positive Power."

A thirst for sensational notoriety and the love of being talked about go far to explain the "superfluity of naughtiness" which begot the senseless tomfooleries upsetting households and bewildering the inmates. For the most part they are the pranks of flighty "electric"¹ girls, often highly strung, bored, it may well be, by the cramping monotony of their homes, especially in isolated country dis-

¹ America, ever resourceful, supplies examples of these. See Podmore's *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 43.

tricts; withal, having a strong vein of cunning in their natures and made by repression more liable to hysteria. They are of the stuff of which neurotic mediums are made; therefore among the cases of mental pathology of which Spiritualism supplies numerous and various examples. It is often a toss-up whether such natures add to the list of anæmic mystics or of fraudulent mediums. Further comment is needless in face of the fact that, as a result of an investigation by the Society for Psychical Research into these poltergeist cases, the evidence was positive that tricky little boys and girls were at the bottom of the mischief, "the onlookers accepting the portents as manifestations of supernormal powers." The disturbances are nearly always traceable to a child, generally to a girl in whom there has often been abnormality or disease.¹

The marvels exhibited by that "variety artist," D. D. Home, are not so easily disposed of. The attestations of distinguished men of science and other high-class witnesses to their genuineness give pause to pronouncement of judgment; the more so, as already stated, because he was never detected in

¹ *Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. xii., pp. 45-115 (1896). In his article on "Spiritualism" in *Chambers's Encyclopædia* the late Dr. A. R. Wallace cites, among the evidences attesting it, the "Extraordinary occurrences" in the house of a Mr. Jobson in Sunderland in 1839. The daughter Mary, a girl of thirteen, was attacked by a mysterious illness, accompanied by raps and knocks and other seemingly mysterious happenings of the poltergeist sort, whose supernormal character, Dr. Wallace says, "was authenticated by sixteen witnesses, including five physicians and surgeons." Two of the lay witnesses told how she discoursed on heavenly things, which in the judgment of Dr. Clanny, a Fellow of the Royal Society, proved angelic inspiration, while others testified how at her bidding they saw, as it were, heaven opened. To-day the S.P.R. would include Mary Jobson in the list of neuropaths.

fraud. The one man who said that he was an impostor was no physicist, but the poet who wrote *Mr. Sludge*, "*The Medium*"—Robert Browning.

Through the agency of rising and tilting tables, of self-played accordions and guitars, of rappings, of spirit hands and spirit lights, those whom Home gathered round him believed themselves brought into the glorious company of invisible immortals; the more so when, in addition, spiritual messages and counsel from the medium's "control" further proved the communion of saints.

"As for religion—why, I served it, sir!
I'll stick to that! With my *phenomena*
I laid the atheist sprawling on his back
And propped Saint Paul up, or, at least, Swedenborg!
In fact, it's just the proper way to balk
These troublesome fellows—liars, one and all,
Are not these sceptics? Well, to baffle them,
No use in being squeamish: lie yourself!"¹

Home's sitters were not "paying guests." He was host; he chose his own company. He assigned each one his place; those who had the greater faith in him were rewarded by being put nearest to him. He was absolute master of the position. If test experiments were suggested, he imposed the conditions. Dimmed, sometimes wholly extinguished, lights were a necessary part of these conditions. Even when the lights are not low, marvels may be accepted as supernormal, because the untrained, sympathetic onlooker, keen as he may think himself in quickness of observation, is a child in the hands of the expert conjurer. Mr. Podmore, who

¹ *Mr. Sludge*, "*The Medium*."

had none of the child's simplicity in his texture, tells that when meeting a man who claimed to possess a peculiar magnetic force by which he could attract iron, he "accepted in all good faith the phenomenon." The man placed a poker upright on its knob between his outstretched knees, then it swayed to one side or the other, following only, as it seemed, the movements of his finger. Mr. Podmore afterwards learned that the trick was accomplished by means of a loop of human hair attached to the humbug's trousers. Trained prestidigitateurs can do a lot with human hair and black thread!

In June, 1871, Sir William Crookes, experimenting on the alteration in the weight of a body with a delicately constructed apparatus, and putting Home to the test, he, presumably, not being in contact with the table on which the machine was placed, found that the balance, which had a self-registering index, was affected three pounds, sometimes more than that. Sir William concluded that this demonstrated the existence of a "hitherto unknown force" for the ebb and flow of which Home was assumed to be accountable! He was convinced that Home's feet and hands were too well guarded to manipulate the machine. But as Omar Khayyám says:

"A Hair, perhaps, divides the False and True";

and here Home again prescribed the conditions of the experiment, his dexterity devising means of attachment to the apparatus.¹ The same experiment, satisfying him as to the "unknown force," was tried by Sir William on "a fascinating blonde

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 237.

'American medium," Annie Eva Fay. Perhaps, in her case, it may suffice to say that, after displaying her powers, in which she had the help of her husband, "Colonel" Fay, to wondering audiences, she was exposed by Mr. Maskelyne. She offered, if he would pay her a certain sum, to appear on his stage at the Egyptian Hall, to show how all her tricks were done. The offer was declined as superfluous.¹

The conjurer can manipulate freely, especially

¹ *The Supernatural?*, p. 194. By L. A. Weatherly, M.D., and J. N. Maskelyne.

Forty-two years have passed since Sir William Crookes announced that he had proved the existence of a "hitherto unknown force." And now, while the proof sheets of this book are in hand, there comes to me a copy of *Light*, of 21st July, 1917, and of *The World*, of 27th *idem*, each journal giving a summary of experiments by Mr. W. J. Crawford, D. Sc., of Belfast, the result of these being to satisfy him as to the existence of "a form of matter unknown to science." "It issues, we are told, from the body in the shape of "psychic rods," invisible and impalpable, but ponderable. The apparatus employed in the experiment are: 1. A weighing machine. 2. A board placed on the platform of the machine. 3. A chair placed on the board. The medium sits on the chair and rests her feet on the board. The "intelligent control" (*i.e.* the assumed spirit) is asked to take out matter from the medium's body to be used in making a cantilever whereby to levitate a table with which the medium is, apparently, not in contact. The "control" is to give three raps when the operation is complete. The weight of the medium slowly decreases in proportion to the power of the raps—sometimes as much as fifty-four and a half pounds—while the table is raised from one to two feet. Ultimately, the abstracted matter flies back into the body of the medium. The lady through whom these wonders are manifest is a Miss Kathleen Goligher, the eldest daughter of a family whose members are Spiritualists. "They make," Sir W. F. Barrett tells us, in his *On the Threshold of the Unseen* (p. 46), "a sort of religious ceremony of their sittings, always opening with prayers and hymns." Although these pietistic preliminaries have naught to do with the genuineness or spuriousness of phenomena at "spirit circles," they have often been coverings of fraud, and they lend an air of suspicion to the sésances of the Goligher household. It would be well if Sir W. F. Barrett would arrange to bring the young lady and the apparatus to London for submission to a series of scientific tests

when he can with one foot and one hand do the work of the two feet and hands. Thus does an atmosphere of scepticism and suspicion invest the whole business.

But levitation, elongation and the fire ordeal are not thus explicable. As for levitation, we fall back, as in crystallo-mancy and other "spiritual" phenomena, on precedents and parallels from the history of illusions. The late Dr. Wallace's capacious œsophagus swallowed all the stories of saints and butlers wafted into "the central blue." "What for instance," he says, "can be a more striking miracle than the levitation or raising of the human body into the air without visible cause, yet this fact has been testified to during a long series of centuries." "We all know," he adds, "that at least fifty persons of high character may be found in London who will testify that they have seen the same thing happen to Mr. Home."¹ [This was written in 1871.] The "facts come from all ages and sources; they fill a large space in the history of hallucinations. In past times the handling of fire and walking through the fire, and the levitation of the body have been recorded of many persons in many parts of the world." What, asks Sir W. F. Barrett, "can be said of these miracles? They are so foreign to ordinary experience that even the testimony of numerous and distinguished witnesses

at the hands of biologists and other experts, among whom Mr. Devant might be included with advantage on the principle of setting a conjurer to catch a conjurer. Science knows no finality, but it must have conclusive evidence before it accepts the existence of "a form of matter hitherto unknown" among the properties of the human body,

¹ *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, pp. 7, 8.

fails to carry conviction to the majority of readers. And yet it is impossible to reject the evidence, and it seems inconceivable that so many critical and sceptical observers were all mistaken or the victims of hallucination.”¹ Then follows a list of notable men, including “that great exposé of humbugs,” the late Professor De Morgan.

There was a still greater “exposé of humbugs,” who flourished in the second century of the Christian era, Lucian of Samosata. In his dialogue, *The Liar*, wherein the superstitions of his time are lashed, Tychiades chaffs Ion over some wonder tale, when “Cleodemus put in: ‘Ah, you will have your joke; I was an unbeliever myself once—worse than you. I held out for a long time, but all my scruples were overcome the first time I saw the Flying Stranger: a Hyperborean he was; I have his own word for it. There was no more to be said after that: there he was, travelling through the air in broad daylight, walking on the water, or strolling through fire, perfectly at his ease.’ ‘What,’ I exclaimed, ‘you saw this Hyperborean actually flying and walking on water?’ ‘I did: he wore brogues, as the Hyperboreans usually do. I need not detain you with the everyday manifestations of his power: how he would make people fall in love, call up spirits, resuscitate corpses, bring down the moon, and show you Hecate herself, as large as life.’ ”²

Iamblichus, a Neoplatonist of the fourth century, was, like Virgil, and with as little reason, reputed

¹ *Psychical Research*, p. 218.

² *The Works of Lucian*. Vol. iii., p. 237. (Fowler's trans.)

to be a magician. Among the wonders told of him is his being levitated ten cubits from the ground while in the act of prayer. His disciples asked him why he who could do such things himself did not let them do likewise. Then laughingly he replied: "It was no fool who tricked you thus, but the thing is not true."¹

Stories of levitation specially gather round St. Philip Neri, St. Dunstan, St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Theresa, and many others whose names are written in the *Acta Sanctorum*. Similar legends come from the East, adding to the list Gautama the Buddha and his disciples, and also Brahmins, who levitated so as to perform more completely the solar rites.² Famous, and nearer our own time, is the levitation of the Franciscan monk, St. Joseph of Copertino, who lived in the seventeenth century. He was often raised in the air, remaining there till called back by the General of his order. Despite old age, his eagerness to soar caused him to take a short flight on the day before he died.³

In his *Sadducismus Triumphatis*, a storehouse of levitation and other legends (1681), Glanvil tells of a bewitched lad living at Shepton Mallet who was seen to rise in the air thirty yards. At other times he was seen, fly-like, with the palms of his hands flat against a beam in the ceiling of his bedroom. Nine people testified to seeing this, and on their

¹ *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 151.

² Among the Yakut tribes of Siberia it was an old belief that the shamans really did ascend into the sky and on their return to earth related what they had seen. *Aboriginal Siberia*, p. 238. By M. A. Czaplicka.

³ *Old Calabria*, p. 76. By Norman Douglas.

evidence Jane Brisks, the witch who played these tricks, was condemned and executed at Chard Assizes in March, 1658.¹ Another possessed man, Richard, a Surrey demoniac, was hoisted into the air and let down by the devil. Glanvil also tells the story of the aerostatic butler who, in the presence of Lord Orrery and Mr. Greatrakes, the "Stroaker," at Lord Surrey's house at Ragley, in Ireland, was lifted by fairies and floated above their heads. Skipping the centuries, in 1864, seven years before Mrs. Guppy's redoubtable flight, a demoniac was suspended for some minutes in the air above the cemetery at Morzine, in Savoy, by a mysterious force; and this in the presence of the Archbishop.

The one recorded levitation of the Rev. Stainton Moses is found in the diary of his very credulous friend, Dr. Speers, and has confirmation—*quantum valeat*—from Moses himself. Sir William Crookes, Lord Lindsay, Viscount Adare and Captain Wynne are in agreement as to having seen Home "in the air supported by nothing visible." The last three are in accord as to his floating through an open window into the outside air and coming through another open window into the room adjoining, the distance between the two windows being about seven feet, and "not the slightest foothold between them." There was full moonshine in the room where the three were sitting. Home glided in feet foremost and sat down. That was on the 16th

¹ It may be well to remind the reader that six years later two poor creatures, Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, were hanged at Bury St. Edmunds, mainly on the judgment of Sir Thomas Browne. "I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are witches."—*Religio Medici* (written in 1635). *Works*, vol. i., p. 45 (1904 edition).

December, 1868, at 5 Buckingham Gate, London. Nine years afterwards, a lapse of time that may impair even a good memory, Captain Wynne wrote to Home as follows:—"The fact of your having gone out of the one window and in at the other I can swear to."¹ But the accounts of the observers differ. The moon was only two days old; hence her light would not count: Lord Lindsay says that Home floated horizontally, Lord Adare that he floated vertically, and there are other discrepancies in detail. But these pale before the larger issues of the story. The naked facts are that what is said to have happened took place in the dark, that Lord Lindsay, sitting with his back to the window, saw a shadow cast by a wisp of moonlight which bias and expectancy united to envisage as Home. Mr. Podmore, always alert in his analysis of evidence, suggests that Home, "having noiselessly opened the window in the next room, slipped back under cover of darkness into the séance room, got behind the curtain, opened the window and stepped on to the window ledge."² As bearing on the question of ocular illusion which plays so large a part in this and kindred matters, the late Professor Newcombe, who was President of the American branch of the Society for Psychical Research, says: "It is a familiar fact of physiological optics that, in a faint light, if the eyes are fixed on an object the latter gradually becomes clouded and finally disappears entirely. Then it requires only a little heightening of a not unusual imagination to believe that if the

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 256.

² *Newer Spiritualism*, p. 72.

object that disappeared was a man he wafted himself through the air and went out of the window.”¹

It is not given to man to share in the full advantages of the Felidæ in dilation of his pupils in the dark; hence the fundamental drawback to the value of what he sees or thinks and affirms that he then saw. But a Mr. Enmore Jones appears to have had the exceptional advantage of seeing, in a well-lighted room, Home rise one foot above the floor. Mr. Jones also saw his aged mother, surely inconsiderately, raised, together with the chair on which she sat, to the level of the table top. That is what Mr. Enmore Jones said.

The list of levitations would seem to have been complete with the records of Mrs. Guppy (who fills spiritually, as well as physically, a large space in the occult), Mr. Moses and Mr. Home. But it has, or may have, additions. A certain “Judge X,” reporting on some poltergeist frolics in Windsor, Nova Scotia, in 1907, when a hogshead turned somersaults and articles flew from shops into the streets, says: “I think that the ‘invisibles’ are contemplating levitating one or more persons; the power here is so great, and there are so many unconscious physical mediums here that I should not be surprised if one or more persons should be levitated on to one of the principal buildings.”²

These defiances of the uniformity of nature bring to mind the story that when Sydney Smith met an old college chum who had become a bishop he said:

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909, p. 139.

² *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 6. By Hereward Carrington.

“Well, my lord, your career and mine contradict a universal law: you have risen by your gravity, and I have fallen by my levity.”

There are several witnesses to Home's elongation. The extent of this is reported to have varied at different times from four to eleven inches. In this he is said to have been exceeded by another medium named Peters, who, by the aid of his “control,” a Red Indian, was elongated eighteen inches. How far that constant factor, bad observation in an obscure light, led men of integrity—Lord Lindsay and Lord Adare—to be convinced, the one that he saw Home elongated when in the trance state, and the other that Home seemed to grow at both ends and then contract to his normal height, the reader must judge for himself. Assuming that the phenomenon occurred, one can only ask, as did the mathematician after reading *Paradise Lost*—“what does it prove?”—about a spiritual world?

The phenomenon of the fire ordeal is not to be thus summarily dismissed. It is no monopoly of mediums; much of interest about it is to be gathered from the Shadrachs, Meshachs and Abed-negos among savage people, and from European and Oriental jugglers. Among the latter it has degenerated into clever trickery; but among the lower races a significance, obscure, perchance sacred, as a survival of ancient rites, attaches to it.

Vedic records, dating from 1200 B.C., tell of a holiness competition between two Brahmins, the test being walking through fire. The one who passed through unscorched was adjudged the holier. The antiquity of the fire ordeal has example in the

same sacred books. A suspected witness had to clear himself by holding hot iron unscathed, and an accused wife to prove her innocence by walking immune through fire. Iamblichus, writing in the fourth century, tells of certain priests that the god within them does not let fire harm them. But this explanation does not carry us much further. The best known classical example of the rite is supplied by the Hirpi Sorani (perhaps meaning Solar wolves) of Mount Soracte,¹ performed by them in propitiation of Feronia, probably a goddess of fire or wild beasts, by leaping over burnt piles. Arruns, speaking through Virgil, calls on the "Highest of gods, Apollo, guardian of holy Soracte, whom first we honour, for whom is fed the blaze of pine piled up, whose votaries we, passing through the fire in the strength of our piety, press the soles of our feet on many a burning coal."² In Bulgaria the Nistinares or "ministrants" hold an annual festival, when huge fires are lighted and Nistinare after Nistinare, wound up to frenzy by wild dancing, climbs the pyre on his naked feet, made immune, as is the common belief, by the gods. Their divine gift is hereditary; so it is with an old Spanish family "who from father to son have the power of going into the flames without being burned and who, by dint of charms permitted by the Inquisition, can

¹ The reference recalls the joy with which Horace bade the heaping of the logs on the hearth of his Sabine villa as he looked on snow-clad Soracte (*nive candidum*). *Carm.*, Book I., ix.:

" . . . draw the wine we ask,
That mellowed vintage, four-year-old,
From out the cellar'd Sabine cask."

² *Æneid*. Book XI., pp. 780-784. (Lonsdale's and Lee's trans.)

extinguish fires." Of the several accounts furnished by travellers, that by Dr. Hocken and Dr. Colquhoun, of Dunedin, may be taken as applicable to the many stories of savages who walk unharmed through fire. The feat was exhibited on an island of the Fijian group. In an open space in the forest a saucer-shaped oven, about twenty-five feet across, had been dug out and filled with stones made white-hot by burning logs. These were dragged away by the natives and then, amidst yells from the crowd of spectators, some seven or eight naked-footed men walked in single file down the slope, then across the stones, returning uninjured.¹ Like the famous three, bound and "cast into the burning fiery furnace" by Nebuchadnezzar, upon their bodies the fire had no power, "nor the smell of fire passed on them."² Similar stories come from China, Japan, the Straits Settlements, India, Trinidad, New Zealand and elsewhere.³ Perhaps the case in which the performer went "one better" than Home is that of a Huron medicine-man, who heated a stone red-hot, put it in his mouth and ran round the cabin with it. His lips and tongue bore no trace of burn or blister, but the stone gave evidence of having "been bitten into," so the worthy witness, one Father Lejeune, reports.⁴

¹ *Magic and Religion*, p. 285. By Andrew Lang.

(In the twelfth chapter of his *Modern Mythology*, Mr. Lang supplies numerous examples of fire walking and fire handling.)

² Daniel iii. 27.

³ "It would be difficult to describe all the tricks performed by the shamans; some of the commonest are the swallowing of burning coals, setting oneself free from a cord by which one is bound, etc."—*Aboriginal Siberia*, p. 233. By M. A. Czaplicka.

⁴ *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 49. By Andrew Lang.

As a man may fearlessly plunge his hand into molten lead, the moisture on his skin protecting him from burning, so red-hot coal may be held in the bare hand. Uncle Remus, to the wonder of the little boy, "picked up a live coal of fire in his fingers, transferred it to the palm of his hand and thence to his clay pipe, which he had been filling."¹ But when Sir William Crookes applied the fire test to the foot of a thick-skinned African, his house—the late Andrew Lang is my authority for this—smelt of roast negro! How the fire-walkers perform their task uninjured nobody knows. My friend, the late Sir B. W. Richardson, suggested that diluted sulphuric acid might be used as a protective, but as Mr. Lang pointed out when I named this to him, that article is not in use among barbaric peoples! He suggested my trying the experiment on myself! Possibly the stones are rapid heat radiators—formed of a substance which quickly parts with its heat; and it is also suggested that the natives possess some secret of a substance producing a profound sweat which renders the soles of the feet immune. Dr. Wallace says that the phenomenon "is inexplicable by the known laws of physiology and heat," so the convenient *deus ex machinâ* is again eagerly invoked and brought into play by spiritualists.

To sum up the impressions produced by the records of the feats ascribed to Home—with the genuineness or spuriousness of which, as already stated, Mr. Podmore contends that "the main defences of Spiritualism must stand or fall"—a cogent explanation of his

¹ P. 12 (Routledge's edition).

success lies in his personal magnetism. His air of openness and sincerity begot implicit trust. Whatever seemed to throw light on the question of possible communication with a spirit world was eagerly clutched at by all his disciples, and their faith in him was further strengthened by his religious attitude. This deepened their conviction that he was no impostor. Even the employment, at the outset, of the stock-in-trade of the conjurer—spirit voices blended with music from guitars, spirit hands clasping knees and scattering flowers—begot no suspicion of his integrity among the credulous whom he honoured with invitations to his séances.

The evidence as to levitation—the most impressive of all the reputed physical phenomena—has no value in face of the impossible demands which it makes on our intelligence. It is suspect as the outcome of the mental attitude of the sitters towards the wonderful, and as fostered by expectancy, which is one of the main factors of hallucinations and sense deceptions. In the case of Sir William Crookes, defective eyesight may explain his belief, since, as the late Sir William Ramsay said to me, “He’s so shortsighted that, despite his unquestioned honesty, he cannot be trusted in what he tells you he has seen.”

In the hands of ecclesiastics, deriving their authority from a passage in the Gospels, binding and loosing have passed from the symbolic to the real, and become engines of power over the fate of men in the world visible and invisible. And the realism has extended to their service to Spiritual-

ism. Here once more the savage and the spiritualist are at one in attributing the untying trick to the action of supernormal powers, that is, in Dr. Wallace's words, "to some undiscovered law of nature." The seer or sorcerer who is believed to be inspired is bound or swathed mummy-like, perhaps, so Andrew Lang suggests, as symbolising the dead with whom he is to have communion. The Greenland "angekok," before taking a journey to the unseen world, is bound with his head between his legs and his hands behind his back by one of his pupils. His house is darkened so that his movements are unseen, and by-and-by he appears unbound: the spirits have loosened his bonds. The Samoyed "shaman" lets himself be tightly bound; he shuts himself in his hut, when voices are heard, "bears growl, snakes hiss and squirrels leap about the room." After a while the shaman walks in free and unbound from the outside! The voices and the noises are believed by the onlookers to be those of spirits who untied the shaman's bonds.¹ Similar tricks are played by Red Indian and other jugglers. The Davenport Brothers were released to the accompaniment of music from stringed instruments and hand-bells, sometimes to the sound of a speaking-trumpet. The discussion which their performances evoked caused the appointment of a committee selected from an audience at Liverpool. Two of the chosen, who knew the secret of a special knot, called Tom Fool's knot, applied it to the wrists of the Brothers, when each protested that the knot

¹ *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 155. The examples are taken by Tylor from the works of the travellers Cranz and Castrén.

was unfairly tied and injured the circulation. A doctor, summoned to give his opinion, said that the knot was not harmful. But the Davenports refused to go on with the performance; their chaplain, Ferguson, was ordered to cut the knots, and there was an end for the time being to the Brothers' exhibitions, but not to their dupes. The late Mr. Maskelyne admitted that the instantaneous tying and untying was simply marvellous, and it utterly baffled everyone to discover, until on one occasion (he does not give the place and date) the accidental slipping down of a curtain in the interior of the cabinet let him into the secret.¹

When the wind had blown over, they returned to this country in 1868, at the instance of a believer, who induced the Anthropological Society to examine their claim to supernormal powers. But again the Brothers refused to comply with the conditions on which a committee of the society insisted as preliminary to the investigation. It was only proper, they rightly argued, that the Davenports should allow their hands to be held, to have colouring matter daubed on them, and in other ways justify their contentions that spirits unloosed their bonds. To all this they said "Nay."

Some months after, to quote from Mr. Podmore, "when Messrs. Maskelyne and Cook gave at the Crystal Palace a performance in imitation of that

¹ *The Supernatural?*, p. 190. In his suggestive *Modern Man and his Forerunners*, Mr. Spurrell tells of the deftness of a chimpanzee in untying difficult knots. He says: "In spite of some experience of ropes picked up whilst I was attached to a ship, I found that I could not secure the chimpanzee to the veranda post by any knot which she could not quite easily unravel." P. 28.

given by the Davenports, some spiritualists, amongst them Benjamin Coleman [an early believer], found the imitation so complete that they saw no escape from the conclusion that Maskelyne and Cook were themselves spirit mediums.”¹ Again and again converts of Coleman’s type have found refuge from the irrefutable in that explanation. “And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.”²

The same fatuous argument was used when the late S. J. Davey showed how the sorry rascals, Slade and Eglinton, worked the oracle in spirit writing—and in broad daylight. The public needs telling what few may be old enough to remember, that in 1876 Slade’s imposture was detected by Sir E. Ray Lankester and Sir H. B. Donkin, with the result that he was put into the dock and sentenced to three months imprisonment with hard labour. A defect in the indictment enabled him to make a successful appeal, and he left the country before a fresh summons, remedying the omission, could be issued. As for Eglinton, he was also detected in fraud. His later rôle was to exhibit the newer phenomenon of materialised spirits, but his career was cut short by the discovery in his portmanteau of some muslin and a false beard which matched the muslin and hair cut surreptitiously a few days previously from the materialised spirit of “Abdullah.” The tint of his shady record was

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 61.

Before the death of one of the brothers in 1884, both had confessed to trickery in their performances. The survivor settled in America as a farmer.

² 2 Thessalonians ii. 11.

further blackened by his having been detected in colluding with Madame Blavatsky in sending an "astral" letter from a ship in mid-ocean. In his *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, Mr. Hereward Carrington, an adept at disclosing spiritualistic chicanery, but, strangely enough, believing in a residuum of genuine phenomena, describes how the spirit-writing trick is worked.

The inquirer goes to a medium, pays his fee, is handed a blank pad and writes his question on it. He tears off the top sheet and puts it in his pocket. The medium takes away the pad and in a few minutes returns with a written answer from the spirit. Underneath the top sheet was a layer of carbon paper, on which, of course, the reproduced question could be read. To defeat possible trickery, the inquirer may prefer to use his own paper, and the medium will be asked, or will actually volunteer, to withdraw while the question is being written. But that wily man is not to be baffled. The table has an oil-cloth cover, under which is carbon paper, and under that is a sheet of thin white silk which the medium withdraws with the carbon copy through the hollow leg of the table fixed in a hole in the ceiling of the room below, and then reads the question.

The trick is at least eighteen hundred years old. The "arch scoundrel," Alexander of Abonoteichos, as Lucian calls that famous medium of the second century, "proclaimed that on a stated day the god would give answers to all comers. Each person was to write down his wish and the object of his curiosity, fasten the packet with thread and seal it with wax, clay, or other such substance. He

[Alexander] would receive these and enter the holy place, whither the givers should be summoned in order by a herald and an acolyte. He would learn the god's mind upon each, and return the packets with their seals intact and the answers attached, the gods being ready to give a definite answer to any question that might be put. The trick here was one which would be seen through easily enough by a person of your intelligence (or, if I may say so without violating modesty, of my own), but which to the ordinary imbecile would have the persuasiveness of what is marvellous and incredible. He contrived various methods of undoing the seals, read the questions, answered them as seemed good, and then folded, sealed, and returned them, to the great astonishment of the recipients. And then it was: 'How could he possibly know what I gave him, carefully secured under a seal that defies imitation, unless he was a true god, with a god's omniscience?' " Lucian goes on to explain the methods of this "triple rogue," narration of whose impudent frauds fills the letter to his witty friend Celsus, famous author of a powerful polemic against Christianity. Lucian adds: "So oracles and divine utterances were the order of the day, and much shrewdness Alexander displayed, eking out mechanical ingenuity with obscurity, his answers to some being crabbed and ambiguous, and to others absolutely unintelligible."¹

To return to the *enfant terrible*, Mr. Davey. He had been a quasi-convert to the extent that he

¹ "Alexander the Oracle-Monger." *Works of Lucian*. Vol. ii., pp. 221, 222. (Fowler's translation.)

expressed a "belief that the idea of trickery or jugglery in slate-writing communications is out of the question." But certain happenings at Eglington's sittings awoke suspicion, and, being an adept amateur conjurer, he got at the secret of the dodges. He then arranged with the late Dr. Hodgson, then Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, to give, under an assumed name, a series of sittings free to all comers, some of whom were told that they would see certain things which they were free to consider as due, or not due, to spiritual agencies. Others were let into the secret. Here is a selection from the phenomena at these sittings. The company heard the scratchings of pencils between slates screwed and corded or sealed together; they saw small pieces of chalk moving under a tumbler on the table, but they never caught Davey in the act of writing. They saw "spirit" writing on slates which they themselves had carefully locked and guarded; on slates which they held firmly against the under surface of the table; on slates wrapped in thick paper and tied with string; answers to questions on locked slates; quotations from books taken by the sitters from the shelves on guarded slates; messages in colours chosen beforehand by the sitters; a message in German for which only a mental request had been made; numbers written down in response to the sitter's mental request, and details of private family history!¹ At the dark séances which Davey gave musical boxes floated about the room; raps were heard; cold hands were felt; the figures of a

¹ *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, p. 152. By Joseph Jastrow.

woman and a bearded man in a turban reading a book, who bowed to the company, were seen, and finally observed to disappear through the ceiling with a scraping noise. "Of none of these marvels could the witnesses find any plausible explanation, so much so that more than one found himself forced to invoke the mysterious agency of magnetism, electricity, or pneumatics."¹ Little wonder that orthodox Spiritualism denounced Davey as a backslider from "the faith as it is in Spiritualism, which Ellen Dawson and Alexis Didier showed forth in their works." An item of personal experience on the part of Mr. Austin Podmore, Mr. Frank Podmore's brother, with Davey, which is given in *Modern Spiritualism*, may here be quoted:

"July, 1886.

"A few weeks ago Mr. Davey gave me a séance, and to the best of my recollection the following was the result. He gave me an ordinary school slate, which I held at one hand, he at the other, with our left hands: he then produced a double slate, hinged and locked. Without removing my left hand, I unlocked the slate, and at his direction placed three small pieces of chalk—red, green and grey—inside. I then relocked the slate, placed the key in my pocket, and the slate on the table in such a position that I could easily watch both the slate in my left hand and the other on the table. After some few minutes, during which, to the best of my belief, I was attentively regarding *both* slates, Mr. Davey whisked the first away and showed me on the re-

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 220.

verse a message written to myself. Almost immediately afterwards he asked me to unlock the second slate, and on doing so I found to my intense astonishment another message written on both the insides of the slate—the lines in alternate colours and the chalks apparently much worn by usage.

“My brother tells me that there was an interval of some two or three minutes, during which my attention was called away, but I can only believe it on his word.

“AUSTIN PODMORE.”

As the reader will wish to know how the trick was done, here is Mr. Davey's explanation, as reported by Frank Podmore. “The ‘almost immediately’ in the letter covered an interval of several minutes! During this interval and, indeed, through the séance, Davey kept up a constant stream of chatter, more or less germane to the business in hand. Mr. A. Podmore, absorbed by the conjurer's patter, fixed his eye on Davey's face, and the latter took advantage of the opportunity to remove the locked slate under cover of a duster from under my brother's nose to the far end of the room, and there exchange it for a similar slate with a previously prepared message, which was then placed by means of the same manœuvre with the duster in the position originally occupied by the first slate. Then, and only then, the stream of talk slackened and Mr. A. Podmore's attention became concentrated on the slate, from which the sound of spirit writing was now heard to proceed. To me the most surprising thing in the whole episode was Mr. A. Podmore's

incredulity when told that his attention had been diverted from the slate for an appreciable time.”¹

Reference should be made to the Report of the Seybert Commission appointed by the University of Pennsylvania to investigate Modern Spiritualism, which was issued in 1887. The Commission was named after Mr. Henry Seybert, who was a Spiritualist, and who, in founding a chair of philosophy in that university, made the appointment of the Commission a condition of the bequest. The Commissioners stated that they could not induce any private mediums to submit their phenomena, and the professional mediums sought to evade a like duty by asking excessive fees or exclusion of conditions that would prevent fraud. However, Slade and some half-dozen others gave them sittings. The unanimous verdict of the Commission, some of whose members had a bias towards spiritualism—the chairman, Dr. Horace Howard Furness, confessed to a leaning in favour of its substantial truth—was that all the mediums were proven to be frauds. How they failed when no lead was given to put them on the scent has an example. Dr. Furness asked three of them in succession to whom a skull which he had in his library belonged in its lifetime. One “spirit” replied, to a black woman named “Dinah Melish”; the second, to “Sister Belle,” and the third, to a Frenchwoman, “Marie St. Clair.” What they were not detected in was supplemented

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., pp. 217, 218. A long footnote on p. 221 summarises the methods adopted by Davey, and the variety of apparatus used by professional mediums in “spirit writing.”

by knowledge possessed by some of the Commission. The Report proceeded to outline the causes of credulity. These operate everywhere. "The first reason is to be found in the mental condition of the observer; if he be excited or deeply moved, his account cannot but be affected, and essential details will be distorted. For a second reason, note how hard it is to give a truthful account of any common everyday occurrence. The difficulty is increased a hundredfold when what we would tell partakes of the wonderful. Who can truthfully describe a juggler's trick? Who would hesitate to affirm that a watch which never left the eyesight for an instant was broken by the juggler on an anvil, or that a handkerchief was burned before our eyes? We all know that the juggler does not break the watch or burn the handkerchief. We watched most closely his right hand, while the trick was done with his left. The one minute circumstance that has been omitted would have converted the trick into no trick. It is likely to be the same in the account of the most wonderful phenomena of Spiritualism."¹ Professor Jastrow tells an amusing story of the outwitting of a medium. Dr. Knerr, a member of the Seybert Commission, attended a séance at which the spirit of a discarnate Indian was to appear and a drum to be played mysteriously. He managed to get some printer's ink on the drum-sticks just before the lights were lowered, and revelled in the bewilderment of the medium when, on turning up the lights, the condition of his hands was manifest. "How in the world printer's ink could have gotten smeared

¹ Jastrow, p. 158.

over them while under the 'control' of the materialised Deerfoot, no one, not even the medium, could fathom."¹

Any confidence that may be placed in Sir W. F. Barrett's competence to pronounce judgment on the spuriousness or genuineness of spiritual phenomena will be further shaken when we find him asserting his belief that "there *is* evidence in Mr. Stainton Moses' script of supernormal knowledge. In three cases he had distinct prevision of a death before the news was generally known. One was the death of President Garfield, twelve hours before even a rumour of it had reached England. Another was that of a man who threw himself under a steam-roller in Baker Street." A spiritualist who was with Moses at the time told Sir William that "Moses' hand suddenly drew a rough sketch of some horsed vehicle and then wrote: 'I am killing myself to-day, Baker Street,' after which, passing into a trance, Moses, greatly agitated, said: 'Yes, yes, killed myself to-day under a steam-roller.'² Yes, yes, killed myself.' No one present knew what this meant, but later on an evening paper related that a cabman had that day committed suicide in Baker Street by throwing himself under a steam-roller."² In this Sir Oliver Lodge would see evidence that Moses "felt that he was in touch with helpful and informing intelligences."³ The value of the information as "helpful" to knowledge of the conditions in the "Beyond" which the spirit of the cabman gave to Moses must impress every thoughtful mind.

¹ Jastrow, p. 145.

² *Psychical Research*, p. 224.

³ *Raymond*, p. 350.

Among the mass of material which Moses left behind him were records of communications, through his "controls"—severally known as Emperor, Rector, and Doctor¹—from distinguished discarnate spirits, Beethoven, Swedenborg, Garfield and others—thirty-eight in all. The spirits gave no details about themselves which could not be found in any biographical dictionary or obituary notices. As for the cabman, his suicide happened early enough in the day to be paragraphed in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, but his name was not given. Does it not occur to Sir William Barrett that Moses, who lived in the neighbourhood, may have seen that paper before he came to the séance? Does it not occur to him to ask why, among the thirty-eight communicating intelligences, this one alone did not reveal his name to Moses? When will these eminent savant-spiritualists obey the Law of Parsimony, which forbids the postulation of unknown powers or causes when natural explanations suffice to account for the effect?²

As a whilom clergyman, and as a man held in esteem by his colleagues at the university school, Moses inspired implicit confidence in his integrity. Few and trustful were the friends whom he invited to his séances. On one occasion his control "Emperor" was indignant because a stranger had been admitted. His guests were already his

¹ "I absolutely agree with Mr. Podmore about Mr. Stainton Moses and his controlling 'spirits.' They were all humbugs."—Andrew Lang, Letter to *The Pilot*, 2nd January, 1904.

² "Miracle is not to be presumed until natural causes have been excluded." This sound aphorism is attributed to William of Occam, a famous schoolman of the fourteenth century.

converts, and would have resented any expression of doubt as to his integrity. As has been seen, he started on the lower plane of conjuring: he always worked in complete darkness, and when he advanced, so to speak, from the grossly physical to become the passive agent of communications, which were in different handwritings and purported to come from different spirits, the hand was the hand of the automaton, but the voice was the voice of Moses. A specimen of the "new revelation" has been quoted: the skill of a practised pulpiteer is manifest throughout.

One incident among others justifies suspicion as to his flawlessness. At a séance where Moses' old and trusty friends, the Speers, were present, he asked them, as soon as the spirit lights appeared, to rub their hands together, probably to divert their attention. "Suddenly," Mr. Moses wrote, "there arose below me, apparently under the table or near the floor right under my nose, a cloud of luminous smoke, just like phosphorus. I was fairly frightened and could not tell what was happening. My hands seemed to be ablaze and left their impress on the door and handles. It blazed for a while after I had touched it, but soon went out and no smell or trace remained." Mr. Podmore suggests that there had been a mishap with a bottle of phosphorised oil!¹ At a séance given by Mrs. Guppy, when

¹ "I cheated when I could,
Rapped with my toe-joints, set sham hands at work,
Wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink,
Rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor match,
And all the rest."

Mr. Sludge, "The Medium."

glowing lights issued from her finger-tips, a similar smell of phosphorus was noticeable; and at other séances the spirits would appear to have made use of matches; not of the "safety" kind. Their dependence on such adjuncts appears to believers to be a necessary condition of the return of the discarnates. The decadence of a mind of the order with which we are bound to credit the Rev. Stainton Moses shows that his moral sense had atrophied; possibly self-delusion played a large part; certainly private gain played none. He went from bad to worse. For there are mediums and mediums: the one class, born charlatans and rascals; the other class, degenerates, who, starting on a course of deception, end by deceiving themselves. They are examples of a morbid pathology with a diseased egotism often aggravated, as in the case of Moses, by indulgence in alcohol. Given a temperament in which the inhibitory power is weak, it is possible so to induce the trance state that the clairvoyant does transcend the normal state, and from the mysterious realms of subconsciousness bring strange messages of things heard and seen from what seems another world. In the case of women, who are more neurotic than men, the pathologic conditions are aggravated; hence the larger number of female mediums. Taken *en masse*, mediums are an unwholesome lot.

There can be no doubt as to the class in which Eusapia Palladino is to be placed. Never was medium put to so prolonged a series of tests; never did the witnesses to these show more perplexity in making-up their minds as to her genuineness. At

Milan four of them were satisfied as to this, the fifth, Professor Richet, reserved judgment. At the Ile Roubaud, where the last-named, Professor Oliver Lodge and the late F. W. H. Myers were present, the verdict was that at least some of the phenomena were due to supernormal agency; at a later séance at Carqueiranne, when Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick were present, they were impressed, but not entirely convinced. At Cambridge the *volte-face* was complete.

Mr. Maskelyne describes her as short, plain-featured, sallow-complexioned and dark-eyed; "her general appearance was that of the usual cunning, oily-countenanced spirit medium"—which tallies with the impression conveyed by the portraits of her in Mr. Hereward Carrington's *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*. But the impression is not so repellent as that which is given of them in photographs of Mrs. Wriedt and Mrs. Piper, with their thin lips, hard expression of feature, and calculating look as if to take the measure of their sitters' credulity.

At the séance given at Cambridge on the 25th August, 1895, by Eusapia there were present Mr. and Mrs. Myers, Professor Lodge, Mrs. Sidgwick, Mr. Maskelyne and his son. Eusapia wore a black dress, not of silk, because that material "acts as a non-conductor of the 'fluence.'" Mr. Maskelyne suggests that the real objection to silk is that it makes "a rustling noise at inopportune moments." She complained that the light was too strong, so that was toned down, and then began the usual phenomena of the necromancer all the

world over: convulsions, general restlessness, rolling of the eyes, sighs and gurgles, with "more method of lifting a table than any furniture remover has ever dreamt of. Her fingers, wrists, toes, knees, calves, her abdomen, she knows how to use them all as occasion serves. Dozens of scientific men have declared that they have seen her lift a table with only the tips of her fingers touching it. All I can say," adds Mr. Maskelyne, "is that when *I* saw her lift a table, there was a vast deal more than her fingers in contact with it." Her "control" turned out to be a famous middle-man (or spirit) between this world and the beyond. A spiritualist, after witnessing some of her manifestations, said "Surely John must be my old friend John King," and from that time "he has been Eusapia's spirit guide." The details of the occurrences at the Cambridge séance are wearying to follow; suffice it that Mr. Maskelyne wrote two days later "to Professor Lodge and informed him that after careful consideration he had come to the conclusion that Eusapia was a trickster," adding that tests securative against fraud to which he proposed she should submit were met with angry remonstrances and blank refusal.¹

Myers reported thus to the Society for Psychical Research:

"I cannot doubt that we observed much conscious and deliberate fraud which must have needed long practice to bring it to its present level of skill.

¹ The substance of the above account of the Cambridge séance is taken from Mr. Maskelyne's lengthy report in *The Daily Chronicle*, 29th October, 1895.

. . . The fraud occurred both in the medium's waking state and during her real or alleged trance. I do not think there is adequate reason to suppose that any of the phenomena at Cambridge were genuine."¹

In a letter to *The Daily Chronicle* of the 4th November, 1895, he refers to the presence of Mr. Maskelyne at Cambridge, testifying that "he had no bias and would have been as much interested as any of us had he found that the phenomena were genuine." Both Mr. Maskelyne and Dr. Hodgson, who had adversely criticised Professor Lodge's credulous report, and suggested how the trick was done, agreed in their verdict. Confirming what Myers said, Mr. Maskelyne wrote to *The Daily Chronicle* as follows:—"I can conceive the possibility of some force existing which may enable a human being by expenditure of energy to produce movements of attraction or repulsion in objects situated at greater or less distance. I only require to be shown that such a force exists. I cannot, however, conceive the existence of a force which will enable a human being to raise perpendicularly an object situated at some distance, and I should require very serious proof of the genuineness of any manifestations partaking of that nature.

"I cannot conceive the possibility of any material 'prolongation' being given off, and reabsorbed by the body of a human being. Phenomena tending to establish this possibility, in my opinion, demand far greater proof than can be derived from transient impressions of one's senses. I do not, however,

¹ *Proc.* Vol. vii., p. 133.

hold that what I cannot conceive cannot possibly exist."

Myers afterwards recanted, although his "control" communicated to a medium known as "Mrs. Holland," by automatic writing, a second recantation. Mentioning Eusapia Palladino by name, his "spirit" declares her to be a fraud. In a letter to *The Daily Chronicle* of 5th November, 1895, Professor Lodge puts on the white sheet of repentance. His belief in the supernormal in Eusapia's performance is abandoned. He says: "I returned to Cambridge and held two sittings, at the second of which I convinced myself that not a single genuine phenomenon occurred. . . . My only regret is that I allowed myself to make a report, although only a private report, to the Society for Psychical Research, on the strength of a few exceptionally good sittings, instead of waiting until I had likewise experienced some of the bad or tricky sittings to which all the Continental observers had borne frequent witness." It is to be regretted that little profit has come to Sir Oliver Lodge after so severe a lesson, and that it has not imbued him with a spirit of caution in acceptance of what, on the more serious side of spiritualism, may also prove "bad and tricky."

In a letter of the 12th November, 1895, Sir Alfred Lyall wrote to me: "It is amusing to see that the foremost supporters, except Myers, are all beating retreats under cover of various explanations of their attitude. In to-day's *Daily Chronicle*, for example, Andrew Lang withdraws behind a demonstration of humorous incredulity." In the letter referred to, Lang writes of "this humorist [Eusapia] . . .

I frankly admit that on the strength of Mr. Lodge's report, I did expect the S.P.R. a better run for their money."

The Report of the Paris Committee, based mainly on Eusapia's rejections of the tests which they desired to apply, was adverse. It was the old story. The degree of light at the séances was determined by her, cover being thereby given to her twitchings and convulsive movements. It was noticed that when all the company stood up there was no tilting of the table: that usually happened when Eusapia's dress bulged out and hid any action of her foot, restrictions on the free movement of which she generally resented. Nearly everything that happened was within reach of her hands or feet. She objected to the sitters touching the table with their feet, or knees, or any part of their clothes. "It impedes," Mr. Hereward Carrington naïvely explains, "the movements of the table, and Eusapia says the sitters would thereby convert themselves into 'conductors,' and would discharge the collection of fluid in the table by conveying it to the floor."¹ The balance test, which was applied to Home, was applied to her: she was detected in depressing the spring by means of a hair. At one séance, when the "spirit" light failed, there was a strong smell of phosphorus (see *ante*, p. 113).

The most detailed report of her performances is that which was the outcome of sittings at Naples held at the instance of the Society for Psychical Research by a Committee of three reputed experts at detecting conjuring. It fills two long chapters

¹ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 242.

in the first part of Mr. Frank Podmore's *Newer Spiritualism*, published in 1910, the year of his lamented death. At these, the "higher phenomena"—spirit lights, visible heads and hands, and appearances from behind curtains, were in full play. One of the three members of the committee, Mr. Hereward Carrington, explains that Eusapia is extremely sensitive to light during the trance state, and even the faintest illumination seems to hurt her intensely.¹ So, apparently, it hurts all other mediums.

When it was suggested that she might be blindfolded, she said that that would "prevent mental concentration. As this is essential, I have to keep my eyes open during the greater part of every sitting." *No darkness, no séance*, is the absolute condition under which the whole gang works, and yet they audaciously reproach the unbelievers as "O ye of little faith."

"The record," says Mr. Podmore, "is as nearly as possible perfect." The three witnesses depone to the conviction that what they saw did really happen, but, as he adds, "the record at critical moments is incomplete, and at almost every point leaves obvious loopholes for trickery."²

Mr. Hereward Carrington's mixture of candour and credulity in his account of the happenings at the séances in New York does not inspire confidence in his competence. He admits that "much fraud was discovered during the latter part of her trip," but he is "just as fully convinced as ever of the supernormal character of the facts."³ He is frank-

¹ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 240.

² *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 141.

³ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, pp. 127, 129.

ness itself. "Inasmuch as I had in the past had no difficulty in detecting fraud in practically every physical medium I had investigated at the *first* sitting, I feel that I could not possibly have been deceived time after time by the few comparatively simple phenomena which Eusapia produces."¹ On the voyage to America she gave a séance at which a "Dr. Oteri, pale and unmistakably moved [*i.e.* his emotions wrought to fever pitch of expectancy], asked for the spirit of his daughter. At once, according to his statement, he was seized with an affectionate embrace. To his query as to whether she was satisfied with her life in spirit-land, there came three knocks on the side of the table." The usual cold draught was felt. Why the spirit was so voiceless that the table had to answer for her is not made clear. There followed, at least all present testified thereto, a hideous, black, mask-like thing near the top of the curtain. Result—hysterics. "All rose from the table but Madame Palladino, who sat motionless, emitting little moans. Her face was somewhat haggard."²

Further materialisations followed on her landing. These were not novelties in America. At a séance given by a medium named Nicols, one of the spirits caught its drapery on a lady's hat and had to wait its return to the spirit-land while the drapery was unhooked. At another séance, where a Mr. De Witt Haugh was performing, at which Mr. Carrington was present, the hymn "Nearer my God to Thee" was sung, and when the room was plunged into total darkness (not to the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light").

¹ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 130.

² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

the first spirit, who had demanded that the company should stand when she appeared—a short, white, rather dumpy figure—was announced as Queen Victoria. “How are you, Queen?” a man stammered out; but no reply was vouchsafed. It would have added to the interest if her Majesty had revealed whether she had seen King David, whom it was always understood she had said she would refuse to meet. A glimmer of light disclosed the medium, stocking-footed, gathering-up some white muslin. At what Mr. Carrington calls “the most famous”—perhaps he meant to write “infamous”—“séance of the series,” one of the sitters, prompted by the late Professor Hugo Münsterberg of Harvard University, a distinguished psychologist, stole into the cabinet behind Eusapia, and suddenly caught tight hold of an unshod foot, causing her to cry out. At the time, the Professor had, as he thought, his foot on the one which was seized, whereas it was resting on her empty shoe.¹ At Cambridge Dr. Hodgson showed that Eusapia made one foot do duty for two by getting the sitters on each side of her to place their feet so that with the toe and heel of one foot she could make them believe that they each held a distinct foot. She was asked

¹ There will have been joy in the spirit world over his repentance on his arrival there.

Miss Caroline Pillsbury, of Brookline, Mass., editor of *Boston Ideas*, claims to have received a “spirit” message from him in which he says: “Although I have been in the spirit world but a brief time, I have received absolute proof that excarnate beings can and do communicate with their earth friends. However valuable the messages I may bring in future time, this one to-day is important. Spirit return is a truth. I am Hugo Münsterberg.”—*Central News*.

Pall Mall Gazette, 18th January, 1917,

if she would allow her hands to be held in position with a piece of string instead of being grasped by the sitters. She refused this absolutely, and also other conditions whose object was to prevent possible fraud.

After attending a séance, Darwin suggested that "the medium managed to get the two men on each side of him to hold each other's hands, so that he was thus free to perform his antics."¹

At a sitting given at Moncure Conway's house, when Professor Clifford was present, Williams was the medium. There was the usual hooking of finger in finger by the company, then the medium's dodge to change the fingers, thus freeing one hand. The delusion on the part of the holders of either hand or of their pressure on either foot is complete. Huxley gives an example of the easy deception of the senses. When a marble is held between the finger and thumb and looked at with both eyes, sight and touch agree that it is single. Squint at it, and it appears double to the vision, although remaining single to the touch. Cross the fore and middle finger and put the marble between their tips, and it will feel as double to the touch, while it is single to the sight.

Obtruded heads and hands and quasi-human shapes were manifest features of Eusapia's séances. At one of these she appears to have invoked the spirit of the historic pirate John King, "beloved," to quote Mr. Podmore, "with his scarcely less famous daughter Katie [revealed to Sir William Crookes and Mrs. Guppy], of two generations of spiritualists through-

¹ *Life and Letters*. Vol. iii., p. 188.

out the breadth of two continents." John King puzzles Mr. Carrington as both ubiquitous and elusive: he suggests that King is an emanation from Eusapia's body rather than a distinct intelligence.¹

A month later arrangements were made for six sittings by Eusapia, in the Physical Laboratory of Columbia University, at which a galaxy of men of science was present. There were three physicists, two biologists, one psychologist, and two neurologists. But the amount of fraud detected at the earlier séances reduced the number to four. Professor Wilson, a biologist, said that they left on his mind "the strongest possible impression of fraud."²

Honest recorder as he is, Mr. Carrington says that "the whole *cru*x of the matter is that poor séances prove nothing; good ones prove the apparently supernormal character of the facts, and until one has seen both good and bad séances, one is not entitled to express an opinion upon the *whole* case."³ But he will probably find himself more in agreement with non-spiritualists in his suggestion that "what appears spiritistic or external to the medium may, after all, be purely subjective in character,"⁴ and he will do well to include in his suggested "Partial

¹ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 255.

² "When Madame Palladino visited us, I had the pleasure of holding her right hand and foot during the two séances in which she was so thoroughly exposed in *Collier's*. [Article in *Collier's Weekly*, New York, 14th May, 1910.] I believe the date was April, 1910. I gave her \$6.00 for the table she had had made for the purpose, and have since taught a little girl of twelve to do all the tipping in the exact manner that it was done by Palladino."—Extract from a private letter from an American conjurer.

³ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 221.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

List of Phenomena which could be studied in a Psychical Laboratory"—in the absence of a medium, "study of the psychology of deception and experiments in the induction of illusions and hallucinations." That list, it may be added, includes "thought-photography; experiments with the so-called human fluid, in magnetic healing, in study of the 'cold breeze' felt at séances, in dowsing, and in weighing and photographing the soul at the moment of death."¹ "A mad world, my masters."

In Scandinavian mythology the Trolls burst at sunrise; the flitting spirit vanishes in the light and reappears in the darkness. The spiritualists explain that the mediums hold their séances in the dark because the delicately materialised forms of the spirits would be destroyed by the action of light rays, strong sunlight being extremely destructive to both animal and vegetable protoplasm.² The savage, who knows nothing about protoplasm, believes that the spirits swarm in the dark, alert to work evil; hence the widespread custom of carrying torches or lighting fires at nightfall. The same reason explains the ceremony of blessing candles in the Roman Catholic Church:

". . . a wondrous force and might
Doth in these Candels lie, which if at any time they light,
They sure believe that neyther storme nor tempest dare abide,
Nor fearful sprites that walke by night, nor hurts of frost or haile."³

The savage dreads the possible return of the dead; hence the various customs in vogue to prevent it. The corpse is carried out feet foremost, so that it

¹ *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 269.

² *Ibid.*, p. 236.

³ Brand's *Popular Antiquities*. Vol. i., p. 26. (Hazlitt's Edition.)

cannot find its way back, stones are piled on the grave to prevent the ghost rising, ashes or sticks are strewn along the funeral route to hinder it in any attempt to return, and so forth. Here, in desire to commune with the departed and to see the beloved one in recognisable form, the spiritualist and the savage part company. Trading on the impassioned yearnings to behold the very image of the lost ones, the rascality and buffoonery of the medium come into full play, deceiving "the very elect."

The materialisation business was in full swing between 1872 and 1880, since when there has been a not unaccountable slump in it.

The evidence given by Sir William Crookes in support of the genuineness of the phenomenon has been cited. Summarising it, he averred that he saw Katie King's spirit at a séance given by Miss Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner) at his house in May, 1874. She was seated in front of the medium, muffled in a shawl, her face not visible, only her hands and feet. This is not a very definite presentment. In the preceding December, at a séance given by the same medium, Katie appeared white-robed, when a skeptical guest, Mr. Volckman, after careful scrutiny of the form, features and other characteristics of the spirit, was convinced that she and the medium were one. He rushed forward and seized Katie by the hand and waist, which were those of Florence Cook. Two of her friends rescued her from his grasp. Katie retreated to the cabinet, which, after a delay of five minutes, was opened, revealing Miss Cook, dressed in black, and seated.

This woman was detected in January, 1880, in personating a spirit. So much, then, for the genuineness of her performances, to which Sir William Crookes testified five months *after* Mr. Volckman's detection of her trickery.

Some years ago four Motuan girls persuaded many natives of Port Moresby that they could evoke the spirit of a youth named Tamosi, who had died three years before. The mother and other sorrowing relatives of the deceased paid a high price to the principal medium, a young woman named Mea, for an interview with the ghost. The meeting took place in a house by night. The relatives and friends squatted on the ground in expectation, and sure enough the ghost presented himself in the darkness and went round shaking hands most affably with the company. However, a sceptic who happened to assist at this spiritual sitting had the temerity to hold on tight to the proffered hand of the ghost, while another infidel assisted him to obtain a sight as well as a touch of the vanished hand by striking a light. It then turned out that the supposed apparition was no spirit, but the medium Mea herself. She was brought before a magistrate, who sentenced her to a short term of imprisonment and relieved her of the property which she had amassed by the exercise of her spiritual talents.¹ "It is hardly for us," adds Sir J. G. Frazer, "or at least for some of

¹ C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, pp. 190-192, cited in Sir J. G. Frazer's *The Belief in Immortality*, vol. i., p. 196. At a séance given by a Miss Wood, of Newcastle, when two materialised spirit forms walked about the room, one of them—the child form of an Indian girl named Pocha—touched and even kissed some of the sitters. *Studies in Psychological Research*, p. 24. By F. Podmore.

us, to cast stones at the efforts of ignorant savages to communicate by means of such intermediaries with their departed friends. Similar attempts have been made in our own country within our lifetime, and I believe that they are still being made in perfect good faith by educated ladies and gentlemen who, like their black brethren and sisters in the faith, are sometimes made the dupes of designing knaves. If New Guinea has its Meas, Europe has its Eusapias. Human credulity and vulgar imposture are the same all the world over."

The year 1878 supplies two cases of mediums as rogues and vagabonds. Two of them, the before-named Williams and Rita, gave a séance at Amsterdam, when a spirit known as "Charlie" was materialised. One of the company clutched at it and found that he had hold of Rita by the coat collar. On the rascals being searched there were found on Rita a beard, six handkerchiefs, a bottle of phosphorised oil; and on Williams a dirty black beard, some yards of muslin and another bottle of oil. It was suggested by the editor of *The Spiritualist* that "evil spirits sometimes abetted the mediums in imposture, and that the facts pointed to Williams and Rita being under some strong control on the disastrous occasion."¹ Similarly, when Mrs. Corner was detected, the editor argued that "grasping one of the forms and finding it to be the medium proves nothing." Sympathetically, the Rev. Stainton Moses said that "such methods of inquiry would often land a man in a fallacy, and that there were powers and phenomena which were not amenable

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 111.

to such rude and ready methods of investigation.”¹ “The last,” says Moncure Conway, “that I heard of Williams was at Rotterdam, where the Customs officer seized his paraphernalia of wigs, masks, rag hands, and phosphorus.”²

Commenting on the detection of the “flower medium,” Frau Anna Röthe, who was sentenced to eight months’ imprisonment in Berlin in March, 1903, Mr. Wake Cook says: The fact that Frau Röthe brought a quantity of “flowers and other things is all in her favour, as the flowers were *real* ones, and if she had not brought them the spirits would have had to steal them, the contention being that the flowers were dematerialised by a chemistry more subtle than that of Crookes or Dewar, and were rematerialised in the séance room. The fact that our chemists have recently succeeded in dematerialising matter shows that they are on the track of these secrets.”³ *Credo quia absurdum est* should be adopted as a spiritualist motto.

One more of these repellent examples will suffice. A clerical spiritualist, named Colley, was present at a séance given by the medium, Dr. Monck, whom he describes as “under control of ‘Samuel.’” He was seen by all to be “the living gate for the extrusion of spirit forms from the realm of mind into this world of matter.” This is what Colley tells us, in the best pulpit style, that he saw “most plainly”:

“Several times a perfect face and form of exquisite womanhood partially issue from Dr. Monck

¹ *Spiritual Notes*, February, 1880.

² *Autobiography*. Vol. ii., p. 352.

³ *Spiritualism: Is Communication with the Spirit World an Established Fact?* (Isbister.)

about the region of the heart. Then after several attempts a full-formed figure, in a nebulous condition at first, but growing solidier as it issued from the medium, left Dr. Monck, and stood a separate individuality, two or three feet off, bound to him by a slender attachment as if of gossamer, which, at my request, 'Samuel,' the control, severed with the medium's left hand, and there stood embodied a spirit form of unutterable loveliness, robed in attire spirit spun—a meshy webwork from no mortal loom, of a fleeciness unattainable and of transfigurative whiteness truly glistening."¹ This was on the 25th September, 1877, some months *after* Monck had "done time" (see *ante*, p. 44).

Among his apparatus were masks, stuffed gloves, muslin and a jointed rod. At the trial of *Colley v. Maskelyne*, the late Dr. A. R. Wallace, subpoenaed as a witness in support of the plaintiff, deposed that in 1878 he had seen "Dr. Monck in the trance state, when there appeared a faint white patch on the left side of his coat, which increased in density and spread till it reached his shoulder; then there was a space gradually widening to six feet between it and his body; it became very distinct and had the outline of a woman in flowing white drapery. . . . I was absolutely certain that it could not be produced by any possible trick."²

Those to whom, despite these exposures of vulgar frauds, the validity of the phenomenon of extrud-

¹ *Spiritualist*, 5th October, 1877. Other spirits, if Raymond Lodge, speaking through Feda, is to be trusted, have their robes "made of light built by the thoughts on the earth plane."—*Raymond*, p. 199.

² *Daily Chronicle*, 27th April, 1907.

ing women may still be an open question, will not receive illumination from Sir Oliver Lodge's deliverances, against which there lies no charge of lightness of touch: "A materialising power may continue, analogous to that which enabled us, when here on the planet, to assimilate all sorts of material, to digest it and arrange it into the organism that served us as a body. It is extraordinarily difficult to conceive of such a power [agreed], and impossible to suppose that it can be a direct power of a psychical agency unaided by the reproductive activity of any other unit already incarnate."¹

Speaking of the "direct voice," "direct writing" and "materialisation" in *Raymond*, he says: "In these strange and, from one point of view, more advanced occurrences, though lower in another sense, inert matter appears to be operated on without the direct intervention of physiological mechanism."²

Sir Oliver Lodge's non-committal on the question of the genuineness of spirit photographs has been quoted: Dr. Wallace's rejoicings that such a marvellous triumph of the spirit over the flesh is no longer an American monopoly, can only provoke a smile, and the opinion of Mr. Edward Carpenter on those "marvels" has no value whatever. Hence, but for the qualified belief in their occurrence which Sir Oliver Lodge expresses and to which those who follow his lead may attach importance, the "marvel" might be named only to be dismissed. However, brief treatment will suffice.

¹ *Survival of Man*, p. 138.

² P. 365.

More than half-a-century ago excitement was created in "circles" in Boston, America, by the exhibition of a photograph of a Doctor Gardner, a spiritualist, on which was the portrait of a cousin who had been dead twelve years. It was taken by a Mr. Mumler, to whose studio numbers flocked to obtain photographs of departed relatives. But examination of these proved that in taking some of them another person had to sit for the spirit. Mumler transferred his camera to New York, and was there prosecuted for fraud, but got off owing to a technical defect in the indictment. The trick still goes on merrily in America, the euphoni-ously-named Bangs Sisters of Chicago being foremost artists in the line. Forty years passed before the "marvels" were repeated here. Mr. and Mrs. Guppy, with the help of a photographer, who followed Mumler's methods, produced spirit pictures. The sitter was posed before the camera and on the developed photograph would be seen another figure, often splotchy and blurred. The negative had been twice exposed, and the dodge exposed with it. Partial exposure of a sensitive plate for a moment to a draped figure will secure the appearance of a ghostly, transparent shadow on the negative.

The Rev. Stainton Moses testified to his having been photographed by M. Buguet at Paris when he was *lying* in a trance state in London. Probably the memory of that reverend witness played him false, as M. Buguet, in the summer season of 1874, had plied his art in London. June, 1875, Buguet was charged by the French Government with the fraudulent manufacture of spirit photographs, when

he made a full confession of his methods. Despite this, a crowd of witnesses came forward to testify that they were convinced that he had obtained photographs of spirits dear to them. Recognition, they all said, was unmistakable. Notwithstanding this, Buguet was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, and a fine of five hundred francs was imposed on him. Four hundred years ago Cardinal Caraffa, legate of Pope Paul IV., said of the Parisians: "*Populus vult decipi decipiatur.*" The scoff has not lost its force to-day.

How, unwittingly, a ghost photograph may be caused is illustrated by a story told by Mr. Podmore:

"The operator had been photographing a chapel. On developing the plate he observed in a panel of the woodwork a faintly discernible face, in which he recognised the features of a young acquaintance who had recently met with a tragic death. In fact, when he told me the story and showed me the picture, I could easily see the faint but well-marked features of a handsome, melancholy lad of eighteen. A colleague, however, to whom I showed the photograph without relating the story, at once identified the face as that of a woman of thirty! The outlines are in reality so indistinct as to leave ample room for the imagination to work in; and there is no reason to doubt that the camera had merely preserved faint traces of some intruder who, during its prolonged exposure, stood for a few seconds in front of it."¹

In 1909 the proprietors of *The Daily Mail* appointed a committee to investigate the whole

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 125.

business. An abstract of the proceedings, together with an explanation of the method of "faking," appeared in *The Times*, 22d June of that year, from which the following is quoted:—

"Three spiritualists and three expert photographers formed the Committee. The three spiritualists reported that the photographers were not in a proper frame of mind to succeed in obtaining spirit photographs. [The spirits, if not "tough," are "devilish sly."] The photographers announced that no scrap of testimony was put before them to show that spirit photography was possible. They invited the submission to them of spirit photographs, and, having examined these critically, they reported that not only did they not testify to their supernatural production, but that they bore on the face of them circumstantial evidence of the way in which they had been produced."

Mr. Maskelyne describes the two methods of production. In the first method—double printing—"the scene is printed from one negative and the spirit printed from another." In the second method—double exposure—"the group is arranged with the 'spirit' in its proper place, the lens is uncovered, and *half* the necessary exposure is given. The lens is again capped, every one remaining still except the 'spirit,' who moves out of sight, and then the exposure is completed. The result of this is, that whilst all else is sharp and well defined, the 'spirit' is represented by a hazy outline, through which all that is behind it shows."¹

¹ *The Supernatural?*, p. 203.

A SELECTED LIST OF MEDIUMS DETECTED IN FRAUD

AMERICAN

The Fox Sisters, Bly, Colchester, Foster, Davenport Brothers, Mrs. Fay, "Dr." Slade, Florence Cook (Mrs. Corner), Eglinton, Mumler.

ENGLISH

Mary Showers, Hudson, Herne, Williams, Rita, "Dr." Monck, Petty, Farman.

FRENCH

Buguet, Debord,¹ Madame Amouroux.

GERMAN

Frau Röthe.

ITALIAN

Eusapia Palladino.

SUSPECTED, BUT NOT ACTUALLY DETECTED
Home, A. J. Davis, Stainton Moses.

¹ He told his dupes that the spirits had formed a Committee of patronage, of which they had nominated King David as patron, and of which Lamartine, Tolstoy, Musset and Gambetta were members! The list of officials of the London Spiritualist Alliance Limited is headed thus: "W. Stainton Moses and E. Dawson Rogers, Presidents in Spirit Life."



PART III

**PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA OF
SPIRITUALISM**

III

CLAIRVOYANCE

EMANUEL SVEDBERG, better known as Swedenborg, is the unwitting founder of the later school of Modern Spiritualism—*i.e.* the branch of it which is concerned with the validity of psychical phenomena. In his *Human Personality* Mr. Myers says: "For my own part I regard Swedenborg—not, assuredly, as an inspired teacher, nor even as a trustworthy interpreter of his own experiences, but yet as a true and early precursor of that great inquiry which it is our present object to advance."¹ He left no immediate successors, but his revelations are anticipatory of the articles in the creed of the apostles of Spiritualism. "I have conversed," he says, "with all my relatives and friends, likewise with kings and princes and men of learning, after their departure out of this life, and this now for twenty-seven years without interruption." "His intercourse," an authority on the subject reports, "extended to souls from the moon and the planets."² And foreseeing that many who read his *Memorable Relations* will believe them to be fictions of imagination, he protests in truth that they are not fictions, but were really seen and heard;

¹ Vol. i., p. 6. "The visions of Swedenborg, divested of their exuberant trappings, are not wholly unreal, and are by no means wholly untrue." Sir Oliver Lodge: *Survival of Man*, p. 236.

² James Spiers. Art., "Swedenborg," *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

not seen and heard in any state of mind in sleep, but in a state of complete wakefulness.¹ His visions date from April, 1745, when he claimed to have received and to be in possession "of spiritual sight, spiritual illumination and spiritual powers of reason."² He was then fifty-seven.

"I was in London," he tells one M. Robsahm, "and dined late at my usual quarters, where I had engaged a room in which at pleasure to prosecute my studies in natural philosophy. I was hungry and ate with great appetite. Towards the end of the meal I remarked that a kind of mist spread before my eyes and I saw the floor of my room covered with hideous reptiles, such as serpents, toads, and the like.³ I was astonished, having all my wits about me and being perfectly conscious. The darkness attained its height and then passed away. I now saw a man sitting in a corner of the chamber. As I had thought myself entirely alone, I was greatly frightened, when he said to me, 'Eat not so much!' My sight again became dim, but when I recovered it I found myself alone in the room. The unexpected alarm hastened my return home. I thought it over attentively and I was not able to attribute it to chance or any physical cause. I went home, but the next night the same man appeared to me again. I was this time not at all alarmed. The man said, 'I am God, the Creator and Redeemer of the World. I have chosen thee

¹ *The True Christian Religion*, London, 1855. Nos. 156, etc. Quoted in Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 144.

² *Emanuel Swedenborg*, p. 74. By J. J. Garth Wilkinson. (1886.)

³ It may sound ungenerous, but it is apposite to remark that spectres of reptiles often follow excessive use of alcohol.

to unfold to men the spiritual sense of Holy Scripture. I will myself dictate to thee what thou shalt write.' The same night the world of spirits, hell and heaven, were convincingly open to me, where I found many persons of my acquaintance of all conditions. From that day forth I gave up all worldly learning and laboured only in spiritual things, according to what the Lord commanded me to write."¹

The story of the thirty years of life that were his after the divine apparition is compact of ever-fresh wonders. He was more than as "one caught up to the third heaven"; traversing space, he was, so he believed, carried from planet to planet, whose inhabitants he describes. Of the Martians, to whose existence our telescopes bring no evidence, he said that they were vegetarians and clothed in the fibrous bark of trees, and in Jupiter he saw herds of wild horses. Of Uranus and Neptune he had not heard; they had not been charted.

In a childhood whose thoughts from its fourth to its tenth year were constantly engrossed by reflecting on God, on salvation, and on the spiritual affections of men, often revealing things in his talk which filled his parents (his father was Bishop of Skara, in Sweden) with astonishment, and made them declare at times that "certainly angels spoke through his mouth,"² we see the germs of Swedenborg's mystical attitude in adult life toward spiritual things.

His followers, who adopted his name, believed that he was the precursor of a new dispensation.

¹ Garth Wilkinson, pp. 76, 77.

² Garth Wilkinson, p. 6.

"The New Church signified by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation" was started in 1788, sixteen years after his death. If the Swedenborgians can hardly be called a flourishing body—Boston, U.S.A., has the largest congregation—they have numbered men of considerable power; among these, one of our own time, an American, Henry James, father of the novelist and of his brother William, pragmatist and psychologist.

Although the fundamental tenets of the newer spiritualism draw their inspiration from Swedenborg's trance utterances, the impulse to that movement is traceable to the theories of a Viennese doctor, Friedrich Anton Mesmer. He was born in 1733, and therefore was in his thirty-ninth year when Swedenborg died. There is no record that the two ever met. Believing, as an astrologer, that the stars, in given positions and at given times, determine human fate, Mesmer identified this stellar magnetism, as he held it to be, with "*un fluide universellement*" in the human body, which could affect all other bodies as "animal magnetism." He may have derived his theory from a study of the voluminous writings of Von Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus, who, two centuries before Mesmer, gained fame by preaching and practising a doctrine of astro-magnetism blended with cabalistic rubbish; or from "Master Greatrakes, the Irish Stroaker," who professed to cure disease by "a sanative contagion"¹; or from Robert Fludd, who explained magnetism as due to the irradiation of angels. Other possible sources might be named,

¹ Kirk's *Secret Commonwealth*, p. 30. (1893 reprint.)

but these would only add to the list of "faith-healers" who preceded Mesmer. He asserted that cures, especially of nervous diseases, could be effected, even at a distance, through "*un fluide universellement*." He anticipated Mrs. Mary Eddy's "absent treatment." In 1778 he went to Paris. This was two years before the arrival there of "Count" Cagliostro of Diamond Necklace notoriety, the arch-quack, to sell his "elixir of immortal life," by which he assured his dupes that he had himself reached his one hundred and fiftieth year, his young and charming wife adding that they had a son who was a captain in the Dutch navy! It should be noted that, when he came to England, the Swedenborgians are said to have given him hearty welcome. His freemasonry caused him to be driven from one country to another, and finally led to his condemnation to death by the Holy Inquisition. But this was commuted to imprisonment for life in the fortress of San Leon, where he died at the age of fifty-two.

Shrewdly playing on the imagination of his patients, Mesmer invested his consulting-room with an atmosphere of the mysterious and the æsthetic. Dim lights were reflected from mirrors on the walls, scents diffused their fragrance, and soft music carried the patients to the borders of dreamland. They were seated together, sometimes with their hands clasped, round a circular trough in which was a row of bottles containing "mesmeric" fluid. Wires with handles, which the patients grasped, were fastened to the mouths of the bottles to ensure contact. After a short period of silence to deepen

the impressiveness, Mesmer would appear in a coat of lilac silk, and with a magic wand in hand, which he at once gracefully discarded, thus freeing his hands to pass strokes over the bodies of the patients and, as they believed, saturate them with the healing "fluid." Then he made them stare fixedly at some object till the optic nerves were wearied and a hypnotic state was induced. His career need not here be pursued further than to add that the popular excitement which he raised, and his appeals to the French Academy of Science and the Royal Medical Society to confirm the truth of his discovery, led to the appointment of a Royal Commission in 1784, of which Benjamin Franklin was a member, to investigate the subject. The result was a condemnatory report. The three factors to which the Commission attributed any benefit that Mesmer's patients had received were " (1) actual contact; (2) the excitement of the imagination, and (3) the mechanical imitation which impels us to repeat what strikes our senses." Mesmer stuck to his theory, but the report damned his future and he passed into obscurity. He died in 1815.

Nevertheless interest in "animal magnetism" was unabated. Theories of subtle and occult curative forces were in the air; their vagueness, as is ever the case, only added to their attractiveness, and magnetism did the duty which, perchance, is more satisfactorily discharged nowadays by the blessed word "electricity." There was a proportion of genuine metal mixed with a heap of alloy, and the public took the coin, not at its intrinsic, but at its face, value. This is more than metaphor,

since virtues were attributed to the more precious metals as media of mesmeric effluence. The theory of magnetic and pathologic connection between the human body and the stars continued to find adherents among Tellurists and Siderists, as they were labelled. There was justification for belief in some mysterious force in the soothing effects wrought upon nervous patients when lulled into the hypnotic state. The matter remained at the empirical stage, the loadstone still led, and in 1845 Baron von Reichenbach, enthused by researches into animal magnetism, discovered, so he honestly believed, a new intermediate force in nature; a subtle emanation given off by the nervous system and differing in each person; a vapour also emanating from discarnate spirits, whereby communication with them was established. This force he named "Od."¹

¹ In the jargon of Esoteric Buddhism, Mr. Sinnett talks of "the spirit of the sensitive getting odylised by the aura of the spirit of the *Devachan*." Devachan is "a state of consciousness apart from the physical body." See Mrs. Besant's article "Theosophy" in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

In a book entitled *Future Life in the Light of Ancient Wisdom and Modern Science*, published in 1907, the author, Mr. Louis Elbe, says the possibility of "the radiation of the odic fluid can no longer be denied in principle now that we know of the general radio-activity of matter" (p. 291). "This fluidic radiation reveals the action of the etheric body . . . it takes place normally outside the cutaneous envelope of the body and is concentrated chiefly at the sensory organs and extremities. . . . Unfortunately, it is imperceptible to the majority of men. Under ordinary conditions it can be seen only by a few persons gifted with a special visual sensibility permitting them to discern the glow by which it is accompanied." [The Spiritualist says, with the Apostle Paul: "We walk by faith, not by sight"]. As a result, its existence is still a contested matter (p. 295). All psychics are agreed that in the hypnotic state they acquire the vision of this fluid which they can see radiating about their magnetism (p. 297). It must be acknowledged that the phenomena occur almost invariably in darkness. This fact may doubtless be explained by supposing that light dissolves the odic fluid and deprives it of all consistence (p. 325).

Into this chaos of theories of odylo-cerebral sympathies, phreno-magnetism, aura, neuro-vital fluids, and other imponderables, order was at last imported by a surgeon, James Braid, of Scotch birth and practising in Manchester. At sittings given by a travelling mesmerist, a Mr. Lafontaine, in 1841, Braid noticed that the mesmerised subjects could not open their eyes, and explained this to himself as being due to paralysis of the nerve-centres through the strain imposed upon them. He made experiments on his servants and friends, and found that he could induce sleep in them by making them stare fixedly at an object held near, and a little above, the eyes. He thus proved that what is called mesmerism is due to upsetting the balance of the nervous system. The fixed stare, the repose of the body, and the exhaustion consequent upon sustained attention with attendant accelerated breathing, bring about profound stupor. He found that he had to deal with a hitherto unsuspected order of cerebral states, to which he gave the general term hypnotic (Greek *hypnos* = "sleep"). The result was refutation—not, unhappily, as the facts collected in this book show, the extinguishment—of the fantastic beliefs which had their origin and support in mesmerism and kindred theories, and the throwing of light on the phenomena of trance, hallucinations, religious excitement, mania and spiritualism. The abnormal in psychical states finds explanation in the physical, and the discovery has enabled the judicious doctor to employ hypnosis with the frequent result of cure of nervous and other diseases, and even of reformation of bad habits.

Braid was following ancient methods. The Hindu of to-day (as did his remote ancestors) subdues the power of the senses and the passions by staring fixedly on the sign of the sacred word *Aum*—a dot in the centre of a semicircle. The Egyptian conjurer induces sleep in his subject by making him look intently at cabalistic signs on the middle of a white plate. From the earliest times religion and medicine have intermingled, and the old custom of Incubation—the sick sleeping in the shrine or temple, so that in their dreams the healing god may make known the cure—prevails in Greece and some parts of Southern Italy. “At first the healing shrines appear to have had close association with the secular medicine of the day, and to have represented depositaries of empirical knowledge; but later they became hotbeds of jugglery and deception.”¹ Among the Dene Hareskins of North America the medicine-man repairs to the magic lodge to fast three days, bringing-on the “Sleep of the Shadow,” so that he may prepare himself to drive out the disease demon from his patients. He blows on them, makes passes over them till they sleep, and, by a loud cry as they awake, it is proven that the demon has been exorcised. The practice of voluntary fasting to produce, among other results, an ecstatic condition, is world-wide, and goes far to explain the belief in visions from a spirit world which are common phenomena of the abnormal. Hence the purpose of the Chinese custom of fasting before sacrificing to the ancestral spirits was to prepare

¹ *A System of Medicine*. Edited by Sir William Osler, M.D., F.R.S. Vol. i., p. xvii.

the mind for communion with them, as the Roman Catholic and High Church sacramentarians abstain from food before swallowing the consecrated wafer. "It was in honour of Pan or Mercury, of Hecate or Isis, that Julian, on particular days, denied himself the use of some particular food which might have been offensive to his tutelary deities. By these voluntary fasts he prepared his senses and his understanding for the frequent and familiar visits with which he was honoured by the celestial powers."¹ A Taoist text speaks of fasting, so that the mind concentrates itself, to be thereby made fit for the reception of the god's revelation. The following Mohammedan recipe for summoning spirits is given in Klunzinger's *Upper Egypt*:—"Fast seven days in a lonely place and take incense with you . . . and read the chapter one thousand and one times from the Koran in the seven days, a certain number of readings; namely, for every day one of the five daily prayers. That is the secret, and you will see indescribable wonders: drums will be beaten beside you and flags hoisted over your head, and you will see spirits full of light and of beautiful and benign aspect."²

Moses received the Law from Jehovah on Sinai after he had fasted forty days and forty nights. For the same period Ezekiel, after the angel had fortified him with food and drink, went to Horeb, the mount of God, and awaited the divine revelation. Forty days and forty nights Jesus fasted in the desert, and when "he was afterward an hungered" there

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, chapter xxiii., p. 465. (Prof. Bury's edition, 1909.)

² P. 386.

came the apparition of Satan, victory over whom brought to Jesus visions of ministering angels. In the remarkable parallel of the temptation of Gautama, the Buddha, worn to a skeleton by self-privation, was approached by Mara, the Prince of Evil, with the promise of universal dominion. But the arch-demon had to retire baffled. Then guardian angels appeared to speak words of comfort to the Buddha, and scatter flowers and pour sweet perfumes over him. The saying of Chrysostom that fasting makes the soul lighter and provides it with wings to mount and soar has example in the story of many a holy man of old whose visions of angels and devils, of paradise and hell, are explained by the exhaustion of the nerve-centres induced by the weakness of a starved body. In this may be found the cause of a wonderful vision enjoyed by a doctor named Crewkhorne, of whom Froude relates that "he, before the three Bishops of Canterbury, Worcester, and Salisbury, confessed that he was rapt into heaven, where he saw the Trinity sitting on a pall or mantle of blue colour, and from the middle upward they were three bodies, and from the middle downward were they closed all three into one body."¹ With profound truth Sir E. B. Tylor says that "Bread and meat would have robbed the saint of many an angel's visit; the opening of the larder must many a time have closed the gates of heaven to his gaze."²

The links between mesmerism, somnambulism, clairvoyance, trance states and kindred pheno-

¹ *History of England*. Vol. ii., p. 343.

² *Primitive Culture*. Vol. ii., p. 415.

mena, are continuous. There have been collected during the past seventy years or more many stories of knowledge of things occurring at a distance not communicated through normal channels of which the clairvoyant had cognisance, and, still more important, of communication with spirits and the spirit world by trance mediums. As with all the examples of the various phenomena now dealt with, the generic types are few, hence there can be only tedium to the reader in multiplying stories whose central incidents are alike. They are what the folklorist calls "variants."

Dealing with the clairvoyant group, there is the case, quoted by Sir W. F. Barrett in his *Psychical Research*, of a girl named Ellen Dawson, who had been subject to epileptic fits as a child, for which she had been successfully treated by a London doctor named Hands. He observed that, when in the trance state, she could apparently see objects without using her eyes. So he tried to cultivate her clairvoyant faculty, and it is asserted that she developed a power of accurately describing distant places and persons she had never seen with her normal vision. In *The Zoist* for 1845 (a periodical dealing with the theory of animal magnetism as a vital nerve fluid) two examples of the girl Dawson's powers are given. Mr. Hands filled the lids of two pill-boxes with cotton-wool and tied one over each of her eyes with broad ribbon, taking care that light was excluded by pressing the edges of the boxes close to the skin. He says: "Still she read and distinguished as before. I now placed her in a room from which I had shut out every ray of light and

then presented her with some plates in Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom*; she described the birds and beasts and told accurately the colours of each, as I proved by going into the light to test her statements. She also distinguished the shades and hues of silks." On another occasion she correctly described Mr. Hands's birthplace, one hundred and forty miles from London. She described the church and the various monuments therein; also the house in which Mrs. Hands was staying. "When asked what Mrs. Hands was doing, Ellen said that she was playing cards and described the other persons present. Then she exclaimed: 'Mrs. Hands has won the game and is getting up from her chair!' All these details turned out to be perfectly correct. Another time she traced the whereabouts of some plate and jewels which had been stolen by a servant from her mistress."¹ A further example of clairvoyance is supplied by a Frenchman, Alexis Didier, brought to England by a M. Marcillet, whose integrity was vouched for by Dr. Elliotson, an early and careful investigator of mesmeric phenomena. Didier, apparently, in the first instance, was thrown into a deep trance; his eyes were then bandaged, generally as follows:—A pad of leather was placed over each eye, then a handkerchief was tied diagonally across each; then a third handkerchief tied across them, and any possible spaces admitting light filled up with cotton-wool. Thus blindfolded, he played *écarté* skilfully and quickly, knew not only his own cards, but his adversary's as well; played correctly with his own cards face downwards on the table and

¹ Pp. 156-158,

would frequently, by request, pick out any named card when the whole pack was face downward. Further, he would—though generally with his eyes unbandaged and merely closed—decipher words written in sealed envelopes, describe the contents of closed packets, and read words and sentences several pages deep in any book that might be handed to him.¹ Robert Houdin, the King of Conjurers in the middle of the last century, after paying two visits to Didier, was nonplussed. He testified “qu’il est tout à fait impossible que le hasard on l’adresse puisse jamais produire des effets aussi merveilleux.” This verdict was endorsed by the Rev. Chancery Hare Townshend, a poet and well-known writer on Mesmerism, who paid a surprise visit to Didier. Townshend’s house at Lausanne was accurately described, and in equal faithfulness of detail his house in London, even the servants there and the horses in the stables.

Alexis had many friends to tap as sources of information; Marcillet was not his only confederate, and his chief successes were secured in card tricks in which every skilful conjurer scores. The late Dr. W. B. Carpenter attended some séances which he gave, and noticed his adeptness in educing such leading questions from his sitters as would help him to the information which he was assumed to reveal to them. Mr. Podmore’s comment on the girl Dawson, whose clairvoyant exhibitions were witnessed by only a few selected observers, is that “something no doubt could have been gleaned by a cunning and unscrupulous person from the gossip of servants,

¹ Podmore: *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 143.

and in nearly every case a wide margin must be allowed for misdescription on the part of the narrator of the marvels.”¹ She may well have heard her mistress talk of her birthplace; she knew that she played cards; she may have often dipped into Cuvier’s book, with its attractive pictures; moreover, bandaging the eyes so as to exclude all possibility of seeing, as Mr. Podmore shows by examples which he cites, is not easy.² Dawson’s success in tracing the stolen property may be ascribed to her knowledge of the haunts and habits of her dishonest fellow-servant. When the clairvoyants score a few successes in the tracing of lost or stolen goods, or when they reveal the nature and value of the securities in a locked safe, the sceptic will be confounded—but not till then.³

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. i., p. 148.

² In the letter from an American conjurer (see *ante*, p. 124), he says: “If I recall rightly, Sir Oliver Lodge’s first faith in ‘Telepathy’ was obtained by his experience with the late Washington Irving Bishop. I knew Bishop well. Learned all his tricks and have at the present the cap (‘blindfold’) which he used in Los Angeles, Cal. I can teach any bright boy of fourteen to do every one of his so-called mind-reading feats, even the blindfold street-driving tests.”

³ “Agaberta, a famous witch in Lapland, could represent to others what forms they most desired to see, show them friends absent, reveal secrets *maximâ omnium admiratione* [to the greatest wonder of everybody]. And yet for all this subtilty of theirs, as Lipsius well observes, neither these Magicians nor Devils themselves can take away gold or letters out of mine or Crassus’ chest . . . for they are base, poor, contemptible fellows most part.”—Burton. *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Pt. 1., Sect. 3, Mem. 1, Subs. 3.

IV

CRYSTAL-GAZING

CLAIRVOYANT and crystal-gazer make common contribution to the occult. The serious recognition of scrying¹ as possibly related to psychical phenomena by eminent physicists, and by the Society for Psychical Research, warrants reference to the subject.

From the *Proceedings* of the Society we learn that glass balls for crystal-gazing can be purchased at its rooms in four sizes on ebonised stands, at from three shillings to eight shillings each; those three inches in diameter are also supplied hollow, to be filled with water, and are recommended as having been found at least equally good as specula with the solid. The Society expresses itself as being "grateful for accounts of any experiments which may be tried." In the same number of the *Proceedings* in which these are advertised Sir Oliver Lodge has a paper explaining the conditions under which the hypnotic state may be induced. The use of crystal balls would appear to be helpful. He says:

"It has long been known that in order to achieve

¹ "The practice of scrying, peeping or crystal-gazing has been revived in recent years."—*Cock Lane and Common Sense*, p. 212. By Andrew Lang. The earliest known use of the word dates from 1549. "Thomas Malfrey and a woman are scryers of the glasse." See *New English Dictionary*, s. v.

remarkable results in any department of intellectual activity the mind must be to some extent unaware of passing occurrences. To be keenly awake and 'on the spot' is a highly valued accomplishment, and for the ordinary purposes of mundane affairs is a far more useful state of mind than the rather hazy and absorbed condition which is associated with the quality of mind called genius, but it is not as effective for brilliant achievement. When a poet or mathematician feels himself inspired, his senses are, I suppose, dulled or half asleep. . . . It does not seem unreasonable to suppose that the state is somewhat allied to the initial condition of anæsthesia—the somnambule condition when, though the automatic processes of the body go on with greater perfection than usual, the conscious or noticing aspect of the mind is latent, so that the things which influence the person are apparently no longer the ordinary events which affect his peripheral organs, but either something internal or else something not belonging to the ordinarily known universe at all."¹

In his booklet on *Crystal-Gazing* Mr. N. W. Thomas asks for any results of scrying; he says that "the crystal is apt to anticipate events," but he cannot be wholly acquitted of frivolity when he suggests that "moderate indulgence in the sport is no more harmful than an after-dinner snooze."²

Crystallomancy—one of the many modes of divination by cups, beryls and other gems, glass balls, magic mirrors, water in ponds or vessels, and

¹ *Proceedings of Society for Psychical Research*. Vol. x., part 26, p. 14.

² *Crystal-Gazing*, p. 159.

other objects—is “as old as the hills,” and has its votaries in all stages of culture.

The Australian natives use a polished stone. Some of them believe that crystals are falling stars and invest them with magic properties. The Malagasy believe that the crystals fall from heaven when it thunders, and with them they scry things otherwise invisible. When Mr. Howitt put some teeth extracted from youths on their initiation in a bag containing a crystal, he was implored to remove them, lest magic should pass from the crystal to the teeth and injure the boys.

The Queensland aborigines grind crystals to powder and use them as rain charms, as do the natives of Equatorial Africa, pouring water over them. The Maori use a drop of blood. The Apache Indian looks into a quartz crystal so that he can see what he wants to see. The Polynesians, when robbed, dig a hole in the floor of the hut, and, filling it with water, call in the medicine-man to see the vision of the thief, the idea being that the gods cause the spirit of the thief to pass over the water, which then reflects it. The Dyak medicine-man scrys in a crystal to find out the hiding-place of the soul, or the disease demon who has seized it. Some Red Indian medicine-men make their patients look into water to find out what things will cure them. The Iroquois put a crystal in a gourd of water, believing that they will see the image of the man who has bewitched another. The same method for the same purpose is found among the Hebridean islanders to-day. The Zulus and the Shamans of Siberia are one with the ancient Romans in gazing into glass

vessels filled with water. In Yucatan the diviner burns gum-copal before a crystal and recites a magic formula. Peering into its clear depths, he learns the places of stolen articles, what is happening to the absent, and by what sorcerer sickness and trouble have come upon those who seek his aid. It is said that nearly every village in Yucatan has one of these stones.¹

Allied in conception is an example of water divination in Pausanias: "In front of the sanctuary of Demeter is a spring. Between the spring and the temple is a stone wall, but on the outside there is a way down to the spring. Here there is an infallible mode of divination, not, however, for all matters, but only in cases of sickness. They tie a mirror to a fine cord, and let it down so far that it shall not plunge into the spring, but merely graze the surface of the water with its rim. Then, after praying to the goddess and burning incense, they look into the mirror, and it shows them the sick person living or dead, so truthful is this water."² Scotch and Greek maidens to-day alike read their fortunes in the mirror, or in the water. Mr. Abbott heard a Salonika girl sing this love couplet:

"A lump of gold shall I drop into the well,
That the water may grow clear and I may see who my husband is
to be."³

The mirror played a large part in Moslem divina-

¹ *Crystal-Gazing*, p. 44. By N. W. Thomas.

² Book VII., 21, 12. (Sir J. G. Frazer's translation.)

³ *Macedonian Folk-lore*, p. 52. And see Chapter VIII., on "Lekanomancy" (divination by water in a dish or basin) in Mr. W. R. Halliday's scholarly work on *Greek Divination*.

tion. This falls into line with the belief of modern sryers that the images do not appear on the mirror itself, but on a kind of vapour floating between the surface and the gazer's eye. The Egyptian magician of to-day performs with mirrors, but more often with ink placed in the palm of the hand. A well-known story of this method is told by Lane in his *Customs of the Modern Egyptians*.

The English Consul-General sent for a magician to discover who among his servants was guilty of a theft. A boy was chosen by the Consul as the sryer, and peering into the ink poured into his hand, after he had seen various images, he described that of a man who was recognised as the culprit by the description which the boy gave. The thief confessed his crime.

Kinglake had a different experience. The wizard traced mysterious figures in ink on a boy's palm, and Kinglake was asked to name the absent person whose form was to be made visible. He named his old headmaster, "flogging" John Keat of Eton. "'Now what do you see?' said the wizard to the boy. 'I see,' he answered, 'a fair girl with golden hair, blue eyes, pallid face and rosy lips.' There was a shot! The wizard, perceiving the grossness of his failure, declared that the boy must have known sin (for none but the innocent can see truth) and kicked him downstairs."¹

In Hindu ceremony the king was directed to cause his warriors before a battle to look two by two into a vessel of water over which verses from one of the sacred books, the Atharva Veda, had been

¹ *Eöthen*, p. 301. (1845 edition.)

recited, and if a warrior did not see his reflection he must not go to battle. The Buddhist monks of Tibet gaze into a bowl or a pool of water for divination. The cup divination found among the South Sea Islanders may be related in conception to Kai Chosrus scrying in his magic cup, wherein the ruler of the world saw within it all that was to be; to the bowls in ancient Babylon by which, when filled with water, the conjurer divined the innocence or guilt of the accused; and to the divination by the cup in the history of Joseph, whereby my "lord divineth."¹

Among the formulæ for divinations in the Talmud one gives the directions to find out whether a man will survive the year. "Take silent water from a well on the eve of Hosha'anah Rabba, fill a clear glass vessel with it, put it in the middle of a room, then look into it: if he sees therein a face with the mouth open, he will live; but if the mouth is closed, he will die." And the Talmud has also a distinct formula for crystal-gazing, or, as it is phrased, "seeing the princes (demons) of the crystal."²

Despite the condemnation of *Specularii* as of Satanic origin by a synod of the fifth century, and by Thomas Aquinas and other fathers of the Church, and by the Faculty of Theology in Paris (in 1398), it was never suppressed. The passion to divine the future defies ecclesiasticism and science alike to do their best to quench it; and an enormous mass of mediæval literature, with its magic formulæ

¹ Genesis xliv. 5-15.

² Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Art. "Divination (Jewish)." Vol. iv., p. 807.

and directions to ensure their efficacy, proves its persistence.

A manuscript of the late fifteenth century runs thus: "To y^e fydyng of theft or of the statt of fryndes or of tresure hyddyn or not hyddyn or of other thyngs whatsoever they be in y^e word you shallte fyrst a chylde lawfullye borne w^t XII years of age and a greatte crystall stone or byrrall holl and sound and lett y^t be anoynted w^t oyle olyve holowyd and then the chylde shall say after me." Then follow the old name charms.¹

Wolsey had a magic crystal, and the Abbot of Abingdon reported to Cromwell that his officers had taken "a suspect parson with certeyne bokes of conjuraciers . . . consecrating of a crystall stone wherein a childe shall lokke and see many things." But most famous of all is the flat, oval, highly polished "shew-stone" of Dr. Dee, who was astrologer to Queen Elizabeth. He is in close link with the crystal-gazer of to-day, whose visions are accorded recognition in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*.² Dee had well-earned reputé as a scholar and mathematician; he had dabbled in alchemy, whence ultimately came trouble. In 1555 he was accused of practising sorcery against Queen Mary's life. However, the Star Chamber acquitted him. A belief in crystallomancy as revealing the world of spirits led to his employing one Edward Kelly as "medium." Although he had lost both ears in the pillory, he enjoyed Dee's full confidence. Beginning the sittings with prayer, a custom which some modern mediums have followed,

¹ Thomas, p. 83.

² See *Proceedings*, March, 1895.

adding hymns thereto, Kelly would start scrying and repeating to Dee all the wonderful things which he said that he saw. The hosts of heaven, the prophets with them, passed in glorious procession in that marvellous stone. Ultimately it came into the possession of Horace Walpole. Writing to Sir Horace Mann, he says: "In assisting Lord Vere to settle Lady Betty Germaine's auction, I found in an old catalogue of her collection this article, *The Black Stone into which Dr. Dee used to call his Spirits*. Lord Vere said that he knew of no such thing. This winter I was again employed by Lord Frederic Campbell, for I am an absolute auctioneer, to do him the same service about his father's collection. Among other odd things he produced a round piece of shining black marble in a leathern case as big as the crown of a hat, and asked me what that could possibly be. I screamed out, 'Oh, Lord, I am the only man in England that can tell you! It is Dr. Dee's black stone!' It certainly is. Lady Betty had formerly given away or sold, time out of mind, for she was a thousand years old, that part of the Peterborough collection that contained Natural Philosophy. . . . Lord Frederic gave it to me, and if it was not this magical stone, which is only of highly polished coal, that preserved my chattels, in truth I cannot guess what did." Walpole humorously attributes to the magic of the stone the fact that when his house in Arlington Street had been broken-into, the burglars overlooked "a little table with drawers and the money and a writing-box with banknotes."¹ A rock-

¹ 24th March, 1771. Vol. viii., pp. 21, 23. (Toynbee's edition.)

crystal ball said to be Dr. Dee's shew-stone is in the British Museum, but there is no proof that it is genuine. He may have had more than one.

It needs "more than heaven-sent moments for this skill"; hence there are published, from time to time, hand-books of formulæ for scrying. Such a one is *Crystal-Gazing and Clairvoyance: embracing Practical Instructions in the Art, History and Philosophy of this Ancient Science*. With Diagrams. By John Melville. 1897. Therein we learn that beryl (Rossetti makes skilful use of this belief in his poem, *Rose Mary*) is the favourite medium of divination by means of transparent bodies. It has, we are told, special magnetic affinities, and is under the zodiacal sign Libra, which is related to the human kidneys, whose healthy condition is essential to sound crystallomancy—we might add, and to much else besides in our bodies. To ensure perfect cleanliness of the crystal it should be boiled in brandy and water—such use of a diluted terrestrial spirit as aid to seeing the celestial spirit is interesting to note. The scryer must preface its use by prayer and fasting, which last-named act of self-denial, as has been shown, is a productive cause of hallucination. It is also well that he take a few drops of the herb succory when the moon is waxing, whereby he may be rewarded by seeing images or pictures bringing information as to something past, present and future, which the gazer has no other chance of knowing. The mystic names which are engraved on the pedestal or frame supporting the crystal should be magnetised by passes made with the right hand and then the connection between

the visible and invisible worlds is complete. The sensitiveness of the crystal is increased if similar passes are made with the left hand. "The *Magnetism* with which the surface of the mirror or crystal becomes charged *collects there from the eyes of the gazer* [the italics are the author's] and from the universal ether, the Brain being, as it were, switched on to the Universe, the crystal being the medium." There we have the whole *modus operandi* of crystal-gazing, with that of telepathy, and effect is given to the text by an illustration of a man seated at a table, his eyes and kidneys governed by Libra; his neck and cerebellum by Taurus, while he rains human magnetism into space.

One of the late Andrew Lang's many hobbies was crystallomancy. He has a chapter on "Crystal Visions, Savage and Civilised" in his *Making of Religion*; one on "Scrying or Crystal-Gazing" in his *Cock Lane and Common Sense*, and he contributed a lengthy Introduction to Mr. Thomas's book on the subject. He says: "I have stared vainly at a glass ball for long, and many a time, but no more felt sleepy than I saw pictures." (I may add that my experience with a ball which he lent me was the same.) In this Introduction he quotes from "Miss X's" (Miss Goodrich-Freer's) paper on crystal-gazing which was published in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, but his best cases are supplied by a friend known as "Miss Angus." Here is one: "I was sitting beside a young lady whom I had never before seen or heard of. She asked if she might look into my crystal, and while she did so I happened to look over

her shoulder and saw a ship tossing on a very heavy, choppy sea, although land was still visible in the dim distance. That vanished, and as suddenly a little house appeared with five or six (I forget now the exact number I then counted) steps leading up to the door. On the second step stood an old man reading a newspaper. In the front of the house was a field of thick stubbly grass, where some lambs, I was going to say, but they were more like very small sheep, were grazing. When the scene vanished the young lady told me I had vividly described a spot in Shetland where she and her mother were soon going to spend a few weeks.”¹

This is supplied by “Miss X”: “I happened to want the date of Ptolemy Philadelphus, which I could not recall, though feeling sure that I knew it, and that I associated it with some event of importance. When looking in the crystal some hours later I found a picture of an old man, with long white hair and beard, dressed like a Lyceum Shylock, and busy writing in a large book with tarnished massive clasps. I wondered much who he was and what he could possibly be doing and thought it a good opportunity of carrying out a suggestion which had been made to me of examining objects in the crystal with a magnifying-glass. The glass revealed to me that my old gentleman was writing in Greek, though the lines faded away as I looked, all but the characters he had last traced, the Latin numerals LXX. Then it flashed into my mind that he was one of the Jewish elders at work on the Septuagint, and that its date, 277 B.C., would serve equally well

¹ *Making of Religion*, p. 97.

for Ptolemy Philadelphus. It may be worth while to add, though the fact was not in my conscious memory at the moment, that I had once learned a chronology on a mnemonic system which substituted letters for figures and that the *memoria technica* for this date was: 'Now Jewish Elders indite a Greek copy.'"

Perhaps the results of modern scrying may be represented in the report of her experience by the late Mrs. Verrall, who, although she describes herself as a good visualiser with the faculty of embodying her ideas in pictorial form, admits that her crystal visions "are mostly quite trivial and purposeless."

The interest of crystallomancy lies in its association with phenomena associated with the trance state, in which, perhaps, may be found justification for the sale of glass balls by the Society for Psychical Research, and for Sir Oliver Lodge's warning against being "keenly awake."

In the section on Crystallomancy in *Psychical Research*¹ Sir W. F. Barrett, after citing historical references to its practice among ancient peoples, more particularly one from an Arabian writer of the thirteenth century who argued that "the diviner sees not with his ordinary eyesight, but with his soul," comments as follows:—"One can hardly believe this was written seven centuries ago, so admirably does it describe the facts and probably the true explanation of crystal vision, a transcendental, or spiritual perception rather than the normal sense perception." In chorus to this Sir Oliver Lodge says: "In these cases of crystal vision,

¹ P. 143.

trance utterance, clairvoyance and the like . . . it is possible that the clairvoyant is responding to some unknown world mind of which he forms a part: that the real agent is neither himself nor any other living person.”¹ Thus can the scrying fortune-tellers, when haled before magistrates and fined, with alternative of imprisonment, plead the authority of scientists as warrant for their pretensions.

¹ *Survival of Man*, p. 73.

V

TELEPATHY AND HALLUCINATION

THE crystal-gazer has an advantage over the telepathist in his possession of a material vehicle whose "revelations" are brought before him in visible form. But this in no wise affects the conviction of the larger number of Spiritualists that telepathy is a verified phenomenon. The attitude of the Society for Psychical Research, on the whole, has been one of commendable caution as to acceptance of evidence which appears to establish proof of the supernormal, but many of its prominent members have committed themselves to belief in telepathy, by which is meant communication between mind and mind otherwise than through the material channel of the senses. One of the most prominent among these, the late F. W. H. Myers, said that "the establishment of thought transference—already rising within measurable distance of proof—was its primary aim, with hypnotism as its second study, and with many another problem ranged along its dimmer horizon."¹

In his *Survival of Man* Sir Oliver Lodge says: "We call the process telepathy—sympathy at a distance: we do not understand it. What is the medium of communication? Is it through the air, like the tuning-forks, or through the ether, like the

¹ *Fragments of Prose and Poetry*. Essay on "Edmund Gurney."

magnets; or is it something non-physical and exclusively psychical? No one as yet can tell you. . . . Meanwhile, we must plainly say telepathy strikes us as a spontaneous occurrence of that intercommunication between mind and mind which for want of a better term we at present style thought transference.”¹

In his *Psychical Research* Sir W. F. Barrett says that “although not officially recognised by science, no doubt of the reality of thought transference can be left on the mind of any diligent and thoughtful student, however critical he may be.”² Then, striking a sort of pulpit note, the professor sinks himself in the preacher, and adds that while telepathy renders “a purely materialistic philosophy untenable, it affords a rational basis for prayer and inspiration and gives us a distant glimpse of the possibility of communion without language, not only between men of various races and tongues, but between every sentient creature which, if not attainable here, may await us all in the future state when we shall know even as we are known.”³ Properly dismissing as valueless the oft-quoted analogy sought to be set up between wireless telegraphy and telepathy, he adds: “How telepathy is propagated we have not the remotest idea. Certainly it is not likely to be through any material medium or by any physical agency known to us.”⁴ In such fashion do these two eminent physicists invoke the unknown to explain the non-existent!

Professor Barrett will surely accord to Sir Ray Lankester the reputation of being “a diligent and

¹ P. 65.² P. 68.³ P. 69.⁴ P. 107.

thoughtful student," and, more than that, of a man of science who can speak "as one having authority and not as the scribes." And this is his deliberate judgment: "As to telepathy, it is simply a boldly invented word for a supposed phenomenon which has never been demonstrated—namely, the communication of one human mind with another by other means than the sense organs. It is an unfair and unwarranted draft on the credit of science which its signatories have not met by the assignment of any experimental proofs. There is not one man of science, however mystic and credulous his trend, among those who pass this word 'telepathy' on to the great unsuspecting, newspaper-reading public who will venture to assert that he can show to me or to any committee of observers experimental proof of the existence of the thing to which this portentous name is given."¹ In his *Kingdom of Man* Sir Ray Lankester further comments on this mythical phenomenon:

"The power which we have gained of making an instrument oscillate in accordance with a predetermined code of signalling, although detached and a thousand miles distant, does not really lend any new support to the notion that the old-time beliefs of thought transference and second sight are more than illusions based on incomplete observation and imperfect reasoning. For the important factors in such human intercourse—namely, a signalling instrument and a code of signals—have not been discovered as yet in the structure of the human body, and have to be consciously devised and manufactured

¹ Letter to *The Westminster Gazette*, 15th December, 1903.

by men in the only examples of thought transference over long distances at present discovered, or laid bare to experiment and observation.”¹

In his lecture on “Mental Education” delivered by Faraday in 1854 at the Royal Institution, he asks: “What have the snails at Paris told us from the snails at New York?” To an acceptable reprint of the volume containing that and other lectures Sir Ray Lankester adds some enlightening notes, among these being given an explanation of Faraday’s cryptic question: “According to an article in *Chambers’s Journal*, 1851, a translation from the French of a M. Jules Alix, two French experimenters had discovered that individuals of the common snail have a mysterious sympathy with one another, and actually influence at a distance and determine the movements of other snails—even at a great distance. These experimenters are related to have shown that snails kept under observation in New York cause ‘sympathetic’ movements corresponding to their own in similar snails kept in Paris. The ‘experimenters’ state that they suppose that threads like the gossamer of spiders issue from snails and keep them in communication with one another, and that these threads are infinitely fine and invisible and can be extended to such vast length as to connect snails separated from one another by the Atlantic Ocean. Accordingly, the ‘discoverers’ of this invisible communication between widely separated snails introduce for their pretended discovery the name Pasilalinic—which, being translated, is ‘universal talking—sympathetic

¹ P. 88.

compass.' The whole story is obviously rubbish. But whether it was a 'hoax which was played on the editor of *Chambers's Journal*, or a jocose parody of the effusions of the mesmerists and 'odylists' of the day, does not appear. Had it first appeared in recent years it might reasonably be regarded as a burlesque of the assertions of the believers in 'thought transference' and 'brain waves,' which is fairly matched by the word 'Pasilalinic.'"¹

In a letter to *The Westminster Gazette* of 26th November, 1907, Sir H. B. Donkin wrote as follows:—"As regards telepathy, I assert that there were two occasions (I think in the winter of 1882-83) when outside critics were invited by the Psychical Research Society to witness and apply tests to certain 'telepathic' *experiments* carried on at the Society's meetings in Westminster. On one occasion the tests, applied to prevent possible *auditory* communications, put a stop to the phenomena; on the other, similar prevention of *visual* communications had a like effect. In the published *Proceedings* of the Society which were sent to me for review some years afterwards by the editor of a well-known weekly no mention was made in the reports of these meetings of the presence of the critics or of the consequent cessation of the phenomena."

In a more recent letter² Sir H. B. Donkin repeats his charge against telepathists that when they are challenged to produce proofs, these are never forthcoming. "Scientific men," he adds (other than those of the small group specified by Sir Oliver

¹ *Science and Education*, p. 71.

² *Times*, 1st December, 1914.

Lodge¹), "several of whom are intimately acquainted with the Psychical Research Society's publications from the beginning and have had personal experience of 'facts' of the kind alleged, fail to recognise any facts which cannot be readily explained, or referred to well-known causes, without recourse to the purely fanciful invention of 'telepathy.' They hold that all the evidence produced in support of telepathy is valueless as proof, not only to hypercritical (or 'orthodox') scientists, but also to men of ordinary common sense who ask for a proof of a new 'fact' before they believe in it."

In his *Hypnotism and Treatment by Suggestion* Dr. J. Milne Bramwell, a specialist on the subject, says: "During the last twenty years I have searched for evidence of telepathy and also taken part in the experiments of other observers; the results, however, have been invariably negative."² The late Sir T. S. Clouston, referring to the studies of manifestations of mind outside of material agencies and relationships initiated by the Society for Psychical Research, says: "That kind of study has not as yet formulated any laws which are invariable, so that it cannot be regarded as within scientific ground. What we can formulate definitely is that brain is the vehicle of mind in the known universe, and its only proved vehicle so far as the proved facts go."³

¹ Balfour Stewart, P. G. Tait, Sir W. F. Barrett, Alfred Russel Wallace, Lord Rayleigh and Sir William Crookes. (Letter to *The Times*, 25th November, 1914.)

² P. 118.

³ *Quarterly Review*, "Mind-Cures," January, 1913, p. 121.

It is in the occurrence of coincidences that telepathy finds specious support. Bacon's shrewd comment on the inferences drawn from "Dreames and Predictions of Astrologie" is to be borne in mind: "First that Men marke when they hit and never marke when they misse."¹ The myriad number of dreams unfulfilled count as nothing against one dream that comes true, and it would be little short of miraculous if, in the crowded incidents of our lives, a certain proportion of them were not coincidental with some happenings elsewhere.

Careful sifting of the stories told in proof of telepathy establishes the fact that those in which some flaw fatal to the proof is not detected are few in number, if any. It is not a question of wilful inaccuracy or wilful distortion, but of defects due to the treachery of memories, especially in regard to what is the essential thing, correctness of dates and details. Anxiety concerning the absent relative or friend begets premonitions which, if they happen to be fulfilled, throw aught else into the shade. A large majority of cases of assumed telepathic communications, especially where accident or death have befallen the absent, have, on close examination, been found not to synchronise. A whole system of belief in thought transference is built on the slender foundation of dreams about persons, distance from whom emphasises solicitude, and to whom some dreaded disaster has come at or about the time when they were in the thoughts or dreams of the absent. Until the *experimental proofs*, on which Sir Ray Lankester and Sir H. B. Donkin logically in-

¹ *Essayes*, XXXV. "Of Prophecies."

sist are producible, nothing more need be said on the subject.¹

A Hallucination is a false perception; seeing or hearing that which has no objective reality. It is due to temporary or permanent disorder of the brain; to the disturbance of the balance of that marvellously intricate organ, whereby illusions and delusions are created.

The myriads of impressions which are conducted by the nerves to the millions upon millions of brain-cells—by what process is unknown—are registered in them, and are recallable at will by memory. Thus are brought back past trains of thought and past states of feeling: in brief, whatever impressions have been conveyed and stored-up. In healthy brains these impressions, when recalled, appear in ordered relation; in the unhealthy brain, with its element of the morbid, they appear in confused unrelation. To know the working of the normal brain is to have the key to understand its abnormal working. There is no warrant for seeking cause of hallucination other than in the registered images in the brain, together with altered states of consciousness. Both functional and organic trouble may involve seeing objects where there is no object, and of hearing voices where there are no voices. When we know that what is seen or heard has no real existence, we have a sane

¹ Few have the time to wade through the records of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* and other extensive literature of telepathy. But in his valuable *Evidence for the Supernatural* Dr. Tuckett supplies materials, notably in chapter iv. and the Appendices J and R, which will suffice for the general inquirer.

hallucination; but when we think that what we see or hear is real, that way lies madness, or what is near akin to it. A temporary hallucination can be brought about by hypnotism, when the hypnotised subject believes what he is told and acts accordingly—*e.g.* fondles a pillow which he is told is a baby, or smells an imaginary bunch of flowers, or drinks neat brandy as if it were water. Under the hypnotic state the power of suggestion, which, more or less, rules all our lives far more than we realise, is largely increased. Expectancy of a sensation will sometimes cause the sensation; this has been my experience when troubled with neuralgia. In an article on "Hallucinations of the Senses"¹ Dr. Maudsley quotes from John Hunter as saying of himself: "I am confident that I can fix my attention to any part until I have a sensation in that part." Sir Isaac Newton said that he could at any time call up a spectrum of the sun in the dark by intense direction of his mind to the idea, and Balzac alleged that when he wrote the story of the poisoning of one of his characters by arsenic he had so distinct a taste of the poison in his mouth afterwards that he was himself poisoned and vomited his dinner.

In the article quoted above, Sir Thomas Clouston tells a story illustrating uncontrollable action, rendering the subject incapable of resisting suggestion. A mysterious hysterical disorder² known as *lâtah* breaks out at intervals among the Malay people of

¹ *Fortnightly Review*, September, 1878, p. 376.

² A full description of this disease is given in Sir Hugh Clifford's *Studies in Brown Humanity*, p. 189, and for similar symptoms see chapter xv., on "Arctic Hysteria," in M. A. Czaplicka's *Aboriginal Siberia*.

Borneo. Here is an example of it: "The cook of a coasting steamer had his baby brought to him when the ship was in port. He was known to be intensely devoted to, and proud of, the child. It was also known to his shipmates that he had lâtah. When he was nursing the baby in his arms on the deck one of the Malay crew came along with a billet of wood which he pretended to nurse in his arms like a baby. Next he began to toss the billet in the air, catching it as it fell, knowing that the unfortunate father, unable to resist, would be fascinated into imitating him. This the poor victim did, tossing his precious baby up towards the awning and catching it again, loathing and dreading to do so, yet compelled by his lâtah state to keep time with his tormentor. Suddenly the sailor opened his arms and let the billet fall on the deck. Unable to resist, the miserable father did likewise: the baby fell heavily on the deck and died."

History abounds with examples of the power of collective hallucinations; all crowds are credulous; easy victims of false perceptions. Professor Jastrow tells of a performer who made the gesture of throwing a ball into the air, keeping it in his hands. Of one hundred and sixty-five children present at the show, seventy-eight declared that they saw the ball go up and disappear.¹ As for the equally easy deception of adults, the reader will find, in addition to the cases of collective deception at séances already quoted, many cogent examples in Gustave le Bon's *The Crowd*, to which should be added that of the report of the appearance of angel bowmen, led by

¹ *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, p. 117.

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St. George, to aid the retreat of our troops from Mons. It was the outcome of an imaginary story¹ told by an ingenious writer, Mr. Arthur Machen, which was converted by the popular belief in the existence of these mythological creatures into an actual phenomenon, some of the officers and soldiers declaring that they saw these pseudo-celestials.² If they were real factors in ensuring victory, their

¹ It appeared in *The Evening News* of 29th September, 1914.

² Two organs of Spiritualism, *The Occult Review* and *Light*, asked Mr. Machen whether the story had any foundation, to which he replied in the negative. The clerical editors of several parish magazines plied him with requests for the exact authorities, and on his assurance that "the tale was pure invention" one of them wrote to suggest that it must be true, and that Mr. Machen's "share in the matter must surely have been confined to the elaboration and decoration of a veridical history." Credence was given to a statement that "dead Prussians had been found on the battlefield with arrow wounds in their bodies!" The story became a text for sermons, subject of correspondence and numerous articles in the religious papers. "It is all," says Mr. Machen, "somewhat wonderful: one can say that the whole affair is a psychological phenomenon of considerable interest, fairly comparable with the great Russian delusion of last August and September." (Introduction to *The Bowmen*, p. 22. 1915.) One fatuous and benighted example of the letters which the fiction elicited appeared in *The Outlook* of 7th August, 1915. Here it is, both for tears and laughter:

THE ANGELS AT MONS

(To the Editor of *The Outlook*)

7th August, 1915.

SIR,—I have read with interest your paragraph on the "Angels at Mons." I firmly believe that they appeared as stated by our soldiers; the Bible is full of the ministration of angels. "Are they not all ministering spirits?" "He shall give His angels charge over thee." Yet when He does, the greatest amazement and unbelief is expressed. Personally I have not the slightest doubt that the angels fought for us at Mons and also at Ypres. St. Peter was delivered from prison by the ministry of angels, and those who will take the trouble to look through the Bible will find constant mention of the ministry of angels.

intermittent intervention might well become constant, to our advantage. But "the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so."¹

We have seen that Emanuel Swedenborg declared that there appeared to him on an evening when he had dined "not wisely, but too well," a man, who, returning the next night, declared himself to be "God the Creator and Redeemer of the World." Clearly Swedenborg, who seems to have been in no wise disconcerted by so unusual a visitor, was the victim of a waking hallucination induced by dyspepsia due to overeating or overdrinking. Had he been more moderate in this, there would have been no revelation, and no Swedenborgians. Wherever there is hypersensitiveness, or any morbid tendency, there are the elements of hallucination. Socrates had often in his ears the divine voice telling him to act or not to act; delusions, both of eye and ear, troubled Luther; numerous are the legends of beatific visions, as of the Virgin to Loyola, to Raphael, and to the little peasant maid at Lourdes; numerous, also, are the legends of voices, as from heaven, which inspired St. Paul, St. Teresa and Joan of Arc; even virile old Hobbes was haunted in the dark by faces of the dead, and my own experience, sometimes, before getting to sleep, is to see a row of leering, ugly faces which quickly van-

We pray daily—at least I hope so—for help in our troubles; yet when it arrives we doubt and refer to "psychologists." Personally I am a "common or garden" person, yet twice I have been saved from certain death by the ministry of angels.—I am, Sir, yours, etc.,

E. R.

¹ Jeremiah v. 31.

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ish if my thoughts are turned elsewhere. Oddest of all hallucinations was that of the woman attacked by peritonitis who declared that she could feel that a church congress was being held inside her.¹ The hallucinations induced by fasting, crystal-gazing and other methods have been dealt with in a previous section.

In 1889 the Society for Psychical Research appointed a Committee to make "a statistical inquiry into the spontaneous hallucinations of the sane."² Seventeen thousand answers to the following question were received:—"Have you ever, when believing yourself to be completely awake, had a vivid impression of seeing or being touched by a living being or an inanimate object, or of hearing a voice; which impression, so far as you could discover, was not due to any external physical cause?"

Of the above-named number, 15,316 answers were in the negative, and 1,684 in the affirmative; the percentage of the affirmatives, the larger number of which came from women, was 9.9. Of the 1,684 who reported having experienced sensory hallucinations, 322 affirmed that they had seen apparitions of the human figure, four that they had seen angels. Of these 326, thirty-two reported death coincidences; in eleven cases the person seen proved to be on his death-bed, though he did not die within the twelve hours taken by the Committee as the limit for death coincidences. Presumably, they had to allow for difference of clocks.

¹ *Hallucinations*, p. 2. By Edward Parish.

² *Proceedings, S.P.R.* "Report on the Census of Hallucinations," pp. 25-422. August, 1894.

Upon these thirty-two cases they thus comment in the concluding paragraph of their report: "*Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper—nor, perhaps, exhausted in any age.*"¹

The net figures afford a very narrow base on which to erect so wide and momentous a conclusion, and the collection of data must be extended over a much larger number of persons before so definite a pronouncement can have serious consideration.

¹ P. 394.

VI

PSYCHICAL MEDIUMS

AMONG the more thoughtful class of spiritualists interest is transferred from what may be called the more inconclusive and challenged phenomena to those which may supply an answer to the questions: "If a man die, shall he live again?" and "If there be a future life, under what conditions do the departed exist?" Here are implied aspirations which lie outside all dogmas, because they are common to the majority of mankind. (Personal immortality has no place in the teachings of Buddha, nor in Early Judaism.) It might be thought that, in seeking satisfaction of these, the spiritualist would justify the name which he has appropriated by finding the sources of the assurance for which he longs within himself. He might thus reach the height whereon the mystic rests, and realise the significance of what the man whom he reveres as the chief apostle of his creed expresses in his noble poem, *Saint Paul*:

"Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest,
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him nor deny;
Yea with one voice, O world, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

Contrariwise, he must needs disguise himself (since the experts whom he consults so advise him), and seeking a woman who "hath a familiar spirit,"

say to her: "I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee." These were the words of Saul to the Witch of Endor, earliest of mediums, concerning whom Reginald Scot, in shrewd and clenching judgment, wrote three hundred and thirty years ago: "He that looketh into it advisedlie shall see that Samuel was not raised from the dead, but that it was an illusion or cousenage practised by the witch."¹ Probably she would nowadays rank as a professional medium, but nothing is said about any fee paid to her by Saul. The private medium of our time makes no charge for her services; the professional's charges vary, from half-a-guinea to one guinea for each sitting. Florence Cook had the

¹ *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, chapter viii., p. 112. (1886 reprint.)

The letter from which I cull the following extract might have been written before the time of Reginald Scot. But it appeared as recently as the 14th April, 1917, in *The Saturday Review*. The writer is the Rev. William Wilson, Rusholme, Manchester:

"The case of Samuel and the Witch of Endor, and the deceased, or the supposed deceased, prophet, who appeared to St. John, were, no doubt, exceptions used for a special and extraordinary purpose by God Himself. Sir Oliver Lodge and those who follow him are giving heed to the evil, seducing, and soul-ensnaring and soul-destroying spirits who personate deceased friends and relatives.

"Satan, though not omniscient nor almighty, has great power, authority, and knowledge; he and his agents often know the history of deceased lives, and so are often well able to personate deceased people and to reveal family and other secrets through various mediums, and possibly also by table-turning, etc. 'By their fruits ye shall know them' and their system. A system which denies and falsifies Christianity, and which, at least in America, teaches, if not practises, free love, is not and cannot be beneficial, good, moral, civilised, or divine, either in origin, outlook, or practice, or general principle and outworking amongst men and women on earth.

"All such profane research into hidden and veiled mysteries should be most carefully shunned and avoided by all good citizens, philanthropists, and true scientists and Christian people generally. Such wicked research is forbidden by God."

good fortune to be subsidised by a wealthy believer, so that she might be free to give her services wherever required. Like Home and Moses, she invited her guests. Doubtless the terms are regulated by the market demand, or, as in the case of the founder of Christian Science, Mrs. Eddy, by divine direction.

She tells us: "When God impelled me to set a price on my instruction in Christian Science Mind-healing, I could think of no financial equivalent for an impartation of a knowledge of that divine power which heals, but I was led to name three hundred dollars." "Moved," she says, "by a strange providence," she raised her charges in a little while to that sum to include only twelve lessons, and these were reduced in later years, in Boston, to seven.¹

Discreetly, not concerning himself with exposed tricksters of the Slade and Davenport type, Sir W. F. Barrett says that he has "not the remotest idea what peculiar physiological state constitutes a medium: sex, age and education are alike immaterial."² No very profound study of human psychology is needful to enlighten him. Charitably assuming absence of deliberate fraud, given an unstable nervous system, with resulting weakness of control of the higher brain-centres, the abnormal has full play; the man or woman thus afflicted becomes a creature of impulses, often self-deceived, non-moral, dreamy and victim of hallucinations. Age would appear to count in impairment of mediumistic power. Home is said to have had warning from his controls that his powers of receiving

¹ *The Faith and Works of Christian Science*, p. 71. By Stephen Paget.

² *Psychical Research*, p. 212.

communications from them were waning, and concerning Mrs. Piper, Sir Oliver Lodge says: "Since this book [*The Survival of Man*] first appeared [1909] her power appears to have vanished. Her controls have said a carefully considered farewell and no trance will now come on. Whether the suspension or inhibition is permanent or temporary, I cannot say. At one time I thought it likely to be permanent, and it would not be surprising after her highly valuable thirty years of service."¹

A solution of Sir W. F. Barrett's puzzlement is offered by one Count Solovovo, who suggests that the spiritual phenomena are produced, "not so much by psychic force—whatever that may mean—as by ephemeral, enigmatic protuberances, projected momentarily from the medium's body; protuberances of various degrees of density—from fluid to hard—which spring into existence and vanish in the twinkling of an eye. . . . If so, we can easily understand that light may have a deteriorating influence on these ephemeral organisms." "The Count's speculations," says Mr. Carrington, who prints them in his *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, "are more or less borne out by facts."²

Such imbecile stuff is quoted only to be dismissed. In the case of the best attested mediums, in whom some genuineness of self-conviction may be present, we hear nothing of projections of the pseudopod kind, nor of aura, odylic force or "emission of force"³ from their bodies. The essential thing,

¹ P. 203. (1915 edition.)

² P. 238.

³ *Drama of Love and Death*, p. 160. By Edward Carpenter.

In an article in *The Occult Review* of June, 1917, on "The Psychic Significance of the Cat," that animal is said to have "a green aura."

assuming some sort of belief in, or some desire to test for oneself, the medium's possession of supernatural power, is how shall he be approached? In an article in *The Nineteenth Century* of January, 1917, Mr. J. Arthur Hill answers that question. You go [not forgetting to take the fee] to "a normal clairvoyant who, by becoming mentally passive, can somehow get true hallucinations, so to speak, of the sitter's deceased friends and relations; or who, by going into trance, can establish still closer communication, a friend or relative sometimes apparently speaking direct through the medium, or at least sending messages through the regular control."¹ . . . A sitting often contains a number of apparently unconnected statements, the connection or the *rationale* of which becomes apparent only by having a series of sittings and carefully collecting the reports, hence the importance of contemporaneous verbatim notes which I make in shorthand."² In plain English, the medium must have a chance of filling up the gaps in his knowledge about the inquirer between his succeeding visits. The Artful Dodger is a 'prentice hand compared with the skilful medium.

It is disconcerting to the inquirer to learn, on the authority of a veteran spiritualist, that "however innocent the medium on this plane may be, the inquirer is liable to be addressed by some mis-

¹ Among some lower races the spirits act more directly. In Labrador they enter the body of the angekok and answer questions concerning their welfare and doings through his person. *Canadian Department of Mines. Anthropological Series, Memoir 91*, p. 137. By E. W. Hawkes (1916.)

² Pp. 110, 111,

chievous entity on the 'other side' who falsely pretends to be the friend sought. This possibility is a serious embarrassment, and no one should rush to séances with the expectation of getting satisfactory results at once. Counsel with experienced friends should come first, and no communication can be finally reassuring till repeated conversations have convinced the inquirer that the right person on the other side is in touch with him or her."¹

In a review of Mr. Hereward Carrington's *Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, Mr. Podmore, who was master of the tricks of the trade, describes how the necessary knowledge is acquired before any one starts as a clairvoyant medium:

"He spends some weeks in going as a book canvasser round the neighbourhood selected for his future field of work. He gossips with servants, reads tombstones and public registers, gets a glimpse when he can of the family Bible. In six months or a year he reaps his harvest. But he does not work single-handed. All the information thus laboriously gathered is poured into the common stock and published for the use of the Guild in the Blue-book. When Mr. Verisopht, of Weissmihtwo, comes to consult the clairvoyant, the latter turns up the Blue-book as we might turn to the suburban directory, opens the page at Weissmihtwo, finds under V that Mrs. Verisopht, poor lady, lost a daughter ten years ago, learns her name, the disease from which she died, her favourite occupation in life, and so on. There is a demand for these messages from 'beyond,' and the commercial

¹ A. P. Sinnett, *Fortnightly Review*, May, 1917, p. 867.

genius of the American nation has found a way to supply it. The Boston section of the Blue-book alone contains, we are told, seven thousand names.”¹

Dramatis personæ at a séance: 1. The sitter or sitters—*i.e.* the inquirers. 2. The trance or clairvoyant medium. 3. The “control”—*i.e.* the spiritual agent through whom the departed spirit elects to send communications. 4. The departed spirit—*i.e.* the communicator. It suggests a quartet, as at whist, No. 2 holding all the tricks. If the sitter be excluded, there remains an unholy trinity—medium, control, and spirit—for “these three are one.”

As for the “control,” the creation of this is an ingenious dodge, whereby the nonplussed medium can account to the sitter for any failure to get into, or continue in, touch with the “communicator,” or for any confusion or errors in messages from him. On p. 55 a quotation from *Raymond* was given, wherein Sir Oliver Lodge explains what the control does, and in chapter thirteen of that book he attempts to explain what the control is. He says that it “is believed by some to be merely the subliminal self of the entranced person, brought to the surface, or liberated and dramatised into a sort of dream existence, for the time. By others it is supposed to be a healthy and manageable variety of the more or less pathological phenomenon known to physicians and psychiatrists as cases of dual or multiple personality. By others again, it is believed to be in reality the separate intelligence which it claims to be.”²

Sir Oliver inclines to this last-named theory. He

¹ *Daily Chronicle*, 7th September, 1908.

² P. 357.

thinks that "the more responsible kind of control is a real person," because "sometimes, after gained experience, the communicator himself takes control and speaks or writes in the first person, not only as a matter of first-person reporting, which frequently occurs, but really in his own proper person, and with many of his old characteristics."¹ In what quagmires of word-mongering the Spiritualists flounder has further proof in this quotation from Sir W. F. Barrett's *On the Threshold of the Universe*, wherein he flatly contradicts Sir Oliver's assumption that the communicator talks.²

"The difficulties of communicating are necessarily great, as we cannot suppose that a physical process or physical organs of speech and hearing are employed by the communicators."³ "My body's very similar to the one I had before," says Raymond, communicating through Feda."⁴

The proceedings at only a select number of—rubbers, shall we call them?—can here be described, for applicable to Spiritualism are the closing words of the Gospel according to St. John, "that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be [or have been] written" about it. And so

¹ P. 360.

² Spiritualists may be credited with ingenuity to prove that there are no fundamental differences between them. They remind us of the candidate for holy orders who was asked to explain the difference between the genealogies in St. Matthew and St. Luke. He replied that there were three reasons for that difference: 1. It was for the confirmation of our Christian faith where the genealogies agreed. 2. It was for the trial of our faith where they differed. 3. It was to call into play our exegetical ingenuity to reconcile them with each other.

³ P. 243.

⁴ *Raymond*, p. 195. This sitting Sir Oliver Lodge naïvely says has "some unverifiable matter" (p. 191).

crammed is that literature with monotonous, dreary stuff that after sampling it one feels that it would be less wearisome to read the whole of Cruden's *Concordance*, whereby, at least, some pleasure would come in charging a well-equipped memory of the Scriptures to complete what is given in abstract or initial.

Hence limitation of choice to some of the utterances of two of the most prominent mediums—Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Leonard and their several “controls.” First, in order of time, to Mrs. Piper, whom, in playhouse terms, Sir Oliver Lodge “presents” in this credential:

“Mrs. Piper in the trance state is undoubtedly (I use the word in the strongest sense; I have absolutely no more doubt on the subject than I have of my friends’ ordinary knowledge of me and other men)—Mrs. Piper’s trance personality is undoubtedly aware of much to which she has no kind of ordinarily recognised clue, and of which in her ordinary state she knows nothing. But how does she get this knowledge? She herself, when in the trance state, asserts that she gets it by conversing with the deceased friends and relatives of people present. And that this is a genuine opinion of hers, *i.e.* that the process feels like that to her unconscious or subconscious mind, the part of her which calls itself Phinuit, I am fully prepared to believe. But that does not carry us very far towards a knowledge of what the process actually is.”¹

¹ *Proceedings, S.P.R.* Vol. x., xxvi., p. 15.

VII

MRS. PIPER

MRS. PIPER, when a young woman, suffered from some ailment, probably of nervous type, and was advised by a friend to consult a professional medium named Dr. Cocke. This was in 1884. Cocke's leading "control" was a French doctor (who does not know French) named Finne or Finnet, afterwards changed into Phinuit. On a second visit she herself became entranced, and thence onwards had a mixed company of controls, among them an Indian girl named Chlorine (Sulphurine or Phosphorine would seem more appropriate); Mrs. Siddons, who recited a scene from *Macbeth*; Bach; Longfellow, who recited some of his own poetry; Commodore Vanderbilt, and, later on, Phinuit, who became her regular control until 1892, when he was temporarily ousted by George Pelham. Mrs. Piper was at her zenith from 1892 till 1896, when she underwent an operation, with consequent decline of mediumistic power. In the winter of that year some of the controls of the late Stainton Moses—Imperator, Rector and others—are in the succession. From 1885, the year of her initiation into the charmed circle of mediums, until his death in 1905, Dr. Richard Hodgson, a detector of Eusapia Palladino's and of Madame Blavatsky's trickeries,

acted as Mrs. Piper's business man. She paid a first visit to England in the winter of 1889-90, bringing the experience of five years' mediumship as equipment. She gave numerous sittings, which were arranged by the late F. W. H. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. Walter Leaf. In 1892 an intimate friend of Dr. Hodgson, whose pseudonym is "George Pelham" (his real name was Pennell), died suddenly in New York. He did not believe in a future life, but some time before his death he promised Hodgson that, if "still existing" after that event, he would do his utmost to get into communication with him. More will be said about him later on. By the time that Pelham's death occurred, Mrs. Piper's "control" had passed from oral communications of the sort associated with the ordinary medium to written ones bearing more in detail upon the conditions under which the departed live in the spirit world. These last-named have had careful record in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* and elsewhere, notes being taken of the happenings at each séance.

In October, 1901, there came a startling report from America that Mrs. Piper had made a full confession, in which she denied that she had had communications from the departed when she was in the trance state. "I never," so the report in *The New York Herald* ran, "heard of anything being said by myself during a trance which might not have been latent in my own mind, or in the mind of the person in charge of the sitting, or in the mind of the person trying to get communication with some one in another state of existence, or of some companion

present with such a person, or in the mind of some absent person alive somewhere else in the world."

But the white sheet of penitence was no sooner donned than doffed. A letter from Mr. J. G. Piddington, the Secretary of the American Society for Psychical Research, stating that Mrs. Piper withdrew her confession, was published in *The Pilot* of 23rd November, 1901. Dr. Hodgson explained that "Mrs. Piper had not discontinued her sittings and that the statement made by her represented simply a transient mood." "She has not," he told an interviewer, "discontinued her sittings for the Society."¹ That she returned to the *status quo ante* is evidenced by séances given by her at intervals reaching from her recantation to recent times.

In Appendix Q to *The Evidence for the Supernatural* Dr. Tuckett discusses at length the phenomena of trance utterances and writings which have their fullest manifestation in Mrs. Piper, and suggests the explanation. In this skilfully performed task he has supplied labour-saving apparatus to others, and of this, as also of the facts set forth in the chapter on "Mrs. Piper's Mediumship" in Mr. Frank Podmore's *Newer Spiritualism*, grateful use is made in this section.

In reading accounts of her séances, Dr. Tuckett bids the reader keep clear in his mind the several means by which she may have acquired knowledge that may appear to be derived from supernormal sources. These are muscle-reading, fishing, guessing, hints obtained in the sitting, knowledge surreptitiously obtained, knowledge acquired in the

¹ *Westminster Gazette*, 26th October, 1901.

interval between sittings, and facts already within Mrs. Piper's knowledge.

In the trance state, as described by a sitter, her face alters perceptibly, her eyes become fixed, the under lip trembles; markedly stertorous breathing ensues, then a stage of unconsciousness resembling quiet sleep.

To this savage culture supplies a crowd of parallels, from which a few examples may be given. "The Fijian priest sits looking steadfastly at a whale's tooth ornament, amid dead silence. In a few minutes he trembles, slight twitchings of face and limbs come on, which increase to strong convulsions, with swelling of the veins, murmurs and sobs. Now the god has entered . . . he gives the divine answer."¹ Any morbid symptoms marked those in whom they were manifest as seers and mediums. In Uganda the medium, often a woman, smokes tobacco until the god comes upon her; then she sits by a sacred fire, perspires and foams at the mouth when the oracle speaks, and the god leaves her.² Among the Patagonians, members of the tribe seized with falling sickness or St. Vitus's dance were at once chosen as possessed by spirits who were believed to speak in or through them.³ In the Karen district of Burmah the native "wee" or prophet works himself into the state in which he can see departed spirits, visit their distant home, and also recall them to the body.⁴

¹ *Primitive Culture*. Vol. ii., p. 133. Brown's *Melanesians and Polynesians*, p. 224.

² *The Baganda*, p. 298. By Rev. John Roscoe.

³ *Dorman's Primitive Superstitions*, p. 372.

⁴ Mason: "Religion, etc., among the Karens," *Jo. Asiatic Soc. Bengal*. Vol. xxxiv., pt. 2.

These "wees" are nervous, excitable men of the type corresponding to the mediums among ourselves.

Perhaps the most striking example is that told me by Miss Czaplicka, who during her intrepid travels through Siberia cleverly secured admission to a shamanistic séance. The shaman sat near a low fire in the tent, the sitters ranged round him. None must touch him nor move, lest the spirits should be disturbed. He beat the drum gently at the start, and then by degrees more loudly—the drumming is called "the language of the spirits," whereby they are summoned. He accompanies this with chants, sometimes with imitations of voices of men and animals, of winds and echoes (for the shaman is a skilful ventriloquist); he sings songs, and dances; then the drum is no longer beaten and the fire is put out. Gentle raps or taps of the spirits are heard; the shaman makes a rushing noise, as if escaping from the tent. After an interval of a quarter of an hour or longer he bumps on the ground to indicate his return. Sometimes he affects exhaustion and waits a while before telling the sitters what message he has brought from the spirits. In an article on the "Ostyaks of Siberia," in Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Miss Czaplicka says: "The actual shamanistic performances are very similar in type among all the natives of N. Siberia: the wandering of the shaman to the upper and lower worlds; his struggle or merely argument with the spirits upon whom the fate of the man for whom the ceremonies are being performed depends; the return of the shaman and the communication to the man of the result of his inter-

view with the spirits; sometimes also the foretelling of the future of various people present at the ceremony.”¹

All over Siberia, where there is a shaman there is also a drum; that and the rattle are indispensable to the magician's bag o' tricks in the phenomena of savage spiritualism everywhere. “The clinging together,” says Sir E. B. Tylor, “of savage sorcery with these childish instruments is in full consistency with the theory that both belong to the infancy of mankind. With less truth to nature and history, the modern spirit-rapper, though his bringing-up the spirit of the dead by doing hocus-pocus under a table or in a dark room is so like the proceedings of the African mganga or the Red Indian medicine-man, has cast off the proper accompaniments of his trade and juggles with fiddles and accordions.”²

During Mrs. Piper's first visit to this country she gave eighty-three sittings between November, 1889, and February, 1890; at all of these the company held one another's hands, those of the sitters next to Mrs. Piper being often pressed against her forehead, by which, adopting the tactics of the “thought-reader,” she would know whether she was on the right scent. From these eighty-three the following is chosen as a type of the features of the whole.

Notes by T. W. M. Lund, M.A., Chaplain of the School for the Blind, Liverpool, dated 26th April, 1890:

“With regard to my experiences of Mrs. Piper,

¹ Vol. ix., p. 580.

² *Early History of Mankind*, p. 141.

I do not feel that I saw enough to form data for any satisfactory conclusion. What impressed me most was the way in which she seemed to feel for information, rarely telling me anything of importance right off the reel, but carefully fishing, and then following up a lead. It seemed to me when she got on a right track the nervous and uncontrollable movement of one's muscles gave her the signal that she was right and might steam ahead.

"In some points she was entirely out of it—*e.g. carriage accident—the dangerous dark man—Joseph and Harriet—and especially my style of preaching.* Nothing could be a more ludicrous caricature than this last.

"In others which I will name she made statements which singularly tallied with the truth—*e.g. my son was ill, and my wife was going to see him. I found that at the very time given she left the house with a cloak on her arm, and brushed her dress in the way imitated by Mrs. Piper.*

"Still I am bound to say, within earshot of Mrs. Piper—before the sitting—I told Mrs. Lodge of my son's illness in Manchester, and my wife's proposed visit to him, and Mrs. Lodge *addressed me by my name of Lund.*

"It is quite true that a carpet was recently burnt at our house; that my wife worries over her duties too much for comfort and health; and that I live in a room full of MSS.

"But, without doubt, the feature of this sitting was the reference to my youngest sister, who died of diphtheria in my absence quite thirty years ago, and whose death was a heartaching sorrow for many

years. Not only did she hit the name 'Maggie,' but even the pet name 'Margie,' which I had quite forgotten. However, the reason afterwards alleged for my absence at her death was quite wrong.

"I accepted the trance condition on Dr. Lodge's authority; otherwise I should have felt bound to test it.

"Altogether, there was such a mixture of the true and false, the absurd and rational, the vulgar commonplace of the crafty fortune-teller with startling reality, that I have no theory to offer—merely the above facts. I should require much more evidence than I yet have, and with much more careful testing of it, to convince me: (1) *that Mrs. Piper was unconscious* [italics are mine]; (2) that there was any thought-reading beyond the clever guessing of a person trained in that sort of work; (3) that there was any ethereal communication with a spirit world. I did not like the sudden weakness experienced when I pressed my supposed sister for the reason of my absence at her death, and the delay wanted for giving a reply.

"That the subject is full of interest, I admit, and I should like to pursue it; but I am far from convinced at present that we have evidence on which to build a new theory."

The foregoing shows that Mrs. Piper (or Phinuit) made several erroneous statements, but also some which tallied with facts. Her successes will serve to throw light on her methods.

Taking these in order, as they are mentioned in the above notes, we come, first, to the statement

that Mr. Lund's son was ill and that his wife had gone to see him. These two require no comment beyond a reminder that Mr. Lund had mentioned the illness and Mrs. Lund's prospective visit within Mrs. Piper's hearing! The carrying of the cloak and the brushing of the dress are not unusual incidents when a lady goes on a journey.

The next success, the reference to the carpet burnt in Mr. Lund's house, dwindles in importance when we read the fuller report quoted by Dr. Tuckett (*Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. vi., p. 533).

PHINUIT. You had a fire a little time ago—no—a long time ago. Some little thing got burnt.”

It was said to be drapery, then tapestry, and only ultimately did Phinuit say that the thing burnt was a carpet. No very difficult feat! This leaves us with the supernormal communication: “You had a fire a little time ago—no—a long time ago.” Even here Phinuit was feeling his way to successful guessing. “You had a fire . . . a long time ago,” whereas the carpet was recently burnt. Take the general statement: Mr. Lund, or the Lund family, had at some time a small fire when “some little thing got burnt.” To what household does this at some time or another not apply? I had a little fire a little time ago, when a portion of my study carpet was burnt. Or take the statement in its amended form: “You had a little fire a long time ago. Some little thing got burnt.” A dozen years ago a candle shade in my dining-room caught fire, scorching a foot or so of the tablecloth.

The third success was Phinuit's remark that Mrs.

Lund worries over her duties too much for comfort or health. Even this hit was not delivered direct. "Your lady had a pain in her back; not very well; it made her a little depressed; tell her not to worry so, and don't be so devilish fussy."

The chief feature of the sitting, Mr. Lund says, was the reference to and naming of his youngest sister and to his absence at her death. Dr. Tuckett gives an illuminating extract from the verbatim report:

"She (Mrs. Piper) said I was away when my youngest sister passed out; not with her; a long way off. No chance to see her. She had blue eyes and brown hair—a very pretty girl. Pretty mouth and teeth; plenty of expression in them. She then tried to find the name and *went through a long list*¹ . . . at last said it had 'ag' in the middle, and that's all she could find. She had changed a great deal. She was much younger and had been in the spirit a long time.

"'But it's your sister—Maggie—that's it—she says you are brother Tom—no, her name's Margie. Too bad you were not at home—it was one of the sorrows that followed Tom all his life. (Correct.) He'll never forget it.'

¹ A not uncommon dodge. Andrew Lang says that "when 'possessed,' Mrs. Piper would cheat when she could—that is to say, she would make guesses, try to worm information out of her sitter, describe a friend of his, alive or dead, as 'Ed.,' who may be Edgar, Edmund, Edward, Edith or anybody. She would shuffle and repeat what she had picked up in a former sitting with the same person, and the vast majority of her answers started from vague references to probable facts (as that an elderly man is an orphan) and so worked on to more precise statements." *Making of Religion*, p. 150.

"I said: 'Ask how it was I wasn't there.'"

"She said: 'I'm getting weak now—*au revoir*.'"

Dr. Tuckett points out how she came to know Mr. Lund's Christian name.

"MRS. PIPER. Who is it you call Lira? The lady's sister (unknown) Lorina, Eleanor, Caterina, a sister, two names—one's Emma, a sister connected with you through marriage? Do you know Thomas? ('I'm Thomas,' I replied.) He'll know me—Thomas Lon—Lund—Tom Lund. That's your sister that's saying it."

It will be remembered that within Mrs. Piper's hearing Mrs. Lodge addressed Mr. Lund by his name.¹

With his never-failing sprightliness Andrew Lang gave a bogus example of the angling for facts by which the astute mediums land their fish. He borrows a dialogue from Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, substituting Mrs. Piper and Phinuit for Eraste, and Mr. Nehemiah K. Chew for M. de Pourceaugnac. The ingenious Mr. Chew thinks that Phinuit has revealed to him what in fact he has told the more astute Phinuit.

"MRS. PIPER—*i.e.* PHINUIT. What do you call that restaurant at Limoges where they cook so well?"

NEHEMIAH K. CHEW. Petit Jean's.

P. and P. Of course, that's it. We often used to go there. And the place where we used to walk?

N. K. C. The cemetery of Les Arènes.

P. and P. Of course. Now tell me about your

¹ Tuckett, pp. 330, 333.

people. How is M . . . how is your . . . oh, the good fellow, don't you know?

N. K. C. My brother the consul?

P. and P. Yes.

N. K. C. He could not be better.

P. and P. And that jolly laughing fellow, your . . .

N. K. C. My cousin, the police magistrate?

P. and P. That's the man.

N. K. C. Gay as ever.

P. and P. And your uncle?

N. K. C. I have no uncle.

P. and P. You had one when I knew you.

N. K. C. Only an aunt.

P. and P. Bless me, it was *aunt* I meant to say.

N. K. C. (*aside*). He knows every one of my relations." ¹

Three brief judgments on sittings purporting to convey communications from, or relating to, the dead have a high value: one from the eminent psychologist, the late William James, who inclined to accept spiritual explanations of the phenomena; the second from Dr. Walter Leaf, whom the late Andrew Lang called "our effective ally"; and the third from Professor MacAlister, an eminent anatomist.

Professor James thus comments on a sitting at which a message purporting to come from Edward Gurney, who died in 1888, was delivered by Mrs. Piper.

"It was bad enough, and I confess that the

¹ *Longmans' Magazine*, December, 1895, p. 211.

human being in me was stronger than the man of science, that I was too disgusted with Phinuit's tiresome twaddle even to note it down. When later the phenomenon developed into pretended direct speech from Gurney himself, I regretted this, for a completer record would have been useful. I can now merely say that neither then nor at any other time was there, to my mind, the slightest inner verisimilitude in the impersonation."¹

"Several instructive instances," remarks Dr. Leaf, "point directly against any knowledge derived from the spirits of the dead. For instance, in Mrs. H. Leaf's first sitting a question was put about 'Harry,' whose messages Phinuit purported to be giving. 'Did he leave a wife?' No answer was given to this at the time, but in accordance with Phinuit's frequent practice the supposed hint was stored up for future use, and at Mrs. H. Leaf's next sitting she was told, 'Harry sends his love to his wife': now, as a matter of fact, Harry never was married."²

"On the whole, then, the effect which a careful study of all the reports of the English sittings has left on my mind is this: that Dr. Phinuit is only a name for Mrs. Piper's secondary personality."³ Dr. Leaf makes frequent references to "equally unsatisfactory sittings, leading to equally justifiable incredulity on the part of the sitter."

"Mrs. Piper," says Professor MacAlister, "is quite wide awake enough all through to profit by suggestions. I let her see a blotch of ink on my

¹ *Proceedings*, S.P.R. Vol. vi., p. 656.

² Tuckett, p. 328.

³ Tuckett, p. 334.

finger and she said that I was a writer. Except the guess about my sister Helen, who is alive, there was not a single guess which was nearly right. Mrs. Piper is not anæsthetic during the so-called trance, and if you ask my private opinion, it is that the whole thing is an imposture, and a poor one.”¹

Neither does it count for righteousness to Mrs. Piper, that Professor Shaler, of Harvard, as the result of close observations at a sitting given to his wife, thus concludes a letter to Professor William James: “I have given you a mixture of observations and criticisms: let me say that I have no firm mind in the matter. I am curiously and yet absolutely uninterested in it for the reason that I don’t see how I can exclude the hypothesis of fraud, and until that can be excluded no advance can be made.”²

Mrs. Piper gave the late Sir George H. Darwin two sittings on the 27th and 29th November, 1889, respectively. He was introduced as “Mr. Smith”—a pseudonym generally given to her sitters. She talked of his ailments. “A keen medical diagnosis,” he says, “but not more than a doctor might venture to say from inspection of me. . . . I was said to study or think much; this is a safe conjecture in a university town. The second half of the sitting was devoted to my friends. Not a single name or person was given correctly, although perhaps nine or ten were named.” Summarising both sittings, Sir George adds: “Almost every statement made could have been given if the medium could have dis-

¹ *Proceedings S.P.R.* Vol. vi., p. 605.

² *Modern Spiritualism.* Vol. ii., p. 335.

covered my name and a few fragments of Cambridge talk between the first sitting and the second. I remain wholly unconvinced either of any remarkable powers or of thought transference.”¹ Now the joke, subsequently explained by Sir George in a letter to Dr. Tuckett, published by him in *The Literary Guide*, March, 1917,² is as follows:—

“The account given to me by Sir George Darwin, after describing how he went to Myers’ house and, under the pseudonym of ‘Smith,’ had his first sitting with Mrs. Piper, runs thus:

“‘Myers sat at some distance from us at a window with a note-book. At the end of the séance, as I went out with him, I noticed his note-book open on the table, with DARWIN written large at the head of the page. Mrs. Piper was apparently in a trance at the other end of the room, and no one was in the room with her for some two or three minutes, while Myers, Mrs. Myers and I were on the stairs. I drew Myers’ attention to the want of care, and he remarked that Mrs. Piper could not have seen the book. Mrs. Myers said my real name in a clear voice on the stairs, with the door of the séance room wide open. At the second interview, near the beginning, Mrs. Piper said: “D-A-R-W-I-N, what a strange name.”’

It is, as Dr. Tuckett says, a good example of the critical care with which the late Frederic Myers, perhaps the most noted member of the S.P.R., conducted psychical research.

At a sitting with Sir Oliver Lodge on the 2nd

¹ *Tuckett*, p. 365.

² P. 43.

February, 1890, several more or less correct statements were made about a George Wilson known to Sir Oliver. It was said that at one time George Wilson had intended to be a doctor. This coincided with an idea that Sir Oliver had got hold of, so that he notes that, at the time, he thought it correct. Actually, as he admits afterwards, it had been Wilson's intention to be a farmer. Thus, he says, "a great deal of this obviously looks like thought transference." At the same sitting statements were made about Wilson's father, a man wholly unknown to Sir Oliver. Concerning this sitting, Mr. Wilson wrote to him: "The statements made by the medium fall into two classes:

"(i) Those which relate to matters known to you.

"(ii) Those which you could not know—as, for example, either my present circumstances or my past life.

"What is said under (i) is as you would see more or less correct. What is said under (ii) is *entirely incorrect*. . . . And, in general, the kind of man represented is the antipodes of the dignified, precise character of my father."

The death of "George Pelham" in 1892—two years after Mrs. Piper's return to America—opened a new chapter in her history. He had one sitting with her some four years before his death, when his name was withheld, and his death seems to have occurred without her knowledge. Soon afterwards, when she gave a séance to one of his friends (John Hart, an assumed name), Phinuit said: "There is another George who wants to speak to you—how many Georges are there about you, anyway?"

“Pelham,” assuming it was he who was communicating through Phinuit, gave his full name correctly, also that of the sitter and of a group of intimate friends. He recognised as his own a stud which the sitter was wearing. “That’s mine; father gave you that. [No.] Well, then, father and mother together. Mother took them. Gave them to father, and father gave them to you.” This was correct: the stepmother had taken them from the dead body. “I saw her brush my clothes and put them away.” This was incorrect; the man who valeted George did that. “Pelham” sent a message to two friends, James and Mary Howard, and to their daughter Katharine. At a subsequent séance given to Mr. Howard he was greeted by “Pelham” familiarly, and with references to people and incidents for the correctness of which Mr. Howard vouched. Desiring further proof, another sitting was given him. “There, as Hodgson, who acted as note-taker, described the scene, whilst Mrs. Piper’s body lay inert and apparently lifeless, her right hand impatiently and fiercely wrote in answer to Mr. Howard’s request. Several statements were read to me and assented to by Mr. Howard; then was written ‘private’ and the hand gently pushed away. I retired to the other side of the room, and Mr. Howard took my place close to the hand where he could read the writing. He did not, of course, read it aloud, and it was too private for my perusal. The hand, as it reached the end of each sheet, tore it off from the block book, thrust it wildly at Mr. Howard and then continued writing. The circumstances narrated, Mr. Howard informed

me, contained precisely the kind of test for which he asked, and he said that he was 'perfectly satisfied, perfectly.' After this incident there was some further conversation, with references to the past that seemed specially natural as coming from G. P."¹

Prima facie, this looks a strong case, standing out in bold relief against the mass of irrelevant stuff that G. P. poured forth, which Dr. Hodgson gives in tedious unabridgment. Both Mrs. Piper and G. P. lived in Boston, and in the intimacy between him and Hodgson there would be subjects of talk, the more so as G. P. met his death through a tragic accident. Moreover, there was the Boston section of the Blue-book already referred to,² which, presumably, was not unknown to so acute a woman as Mrs. Piper. When G. P. was asked to give names specially asked for, details of the Boston society which he and others had formed, he ("resembling all the other Piper personalities," as Mr. Podmore says³) stumbled or blundered. At later sittings he had more to tell, and tells it correctly. Bearing on this, Dr. Tuckett says that in the sixth volume of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* he finds "that on at least fourteen occasions Mrs. Piper gave information at a second or subsequent sitting which she had not succeeded in giving at the first sitting."⁴ Every year "Mrs. Piper has been getting a greater grasp of the problem how to supply the type of evidence which her sitters want her to furnish in support of the 'spiritualist hypothesis,' both by means of an

¹ *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 174.

² *Ante*, p. 187.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁴ *Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 342.

increasing acquaintance with psychic literature and with those engaged in psychic research, and also by means of hints and suggestions made by sitters to her—that is, to her ‘control’ in the trance state.”¹

Concerning “G. P.,” Andrew Lang was sceptical. He says that “when alive, he was a scholar and metaphysician; when dead he had forgotten his Greek and in philosophy would have been plucked. He did not find any difficulty in mere ordinary conversation. But ask him for any proof of his identity and he was, usually, incoherent or wholly mistaken. His prophecies would have ruined any sporting prophet. His excuses for his blunders bordered on the mendacious, though fluent enough.”²

In a volume entitled *The Quest for Dean Bridgman Conner*, published in 1916,³ a story of putting the spirit “on inquiry” is told. In February, 1895, a young electrician bearing that name, living in Mexico, died of typhoid fever and was buried in the American cemetery. The death was notified to his parents in Burlington, Vermont, and, following on this, his father had a dream “in which the son appeared and said he was not dead, but was alive and held captive in Mexico.” The misrule in that country warranted a suspicion that the son had been kidnapped and was in the hands of brigands. The body was exhumed and there was some doubt as to its identity. The publicity given to the affair caused Dr. Hodgson to consult Mrs. Piper. She gave several séances, the result of which was to learn

¹ *Evidence for the Supernatural*, p. 323.

² *The Pilot*, 23rd November, 1901.

³ By Anthony T. Philpott. (Heinemann.)

from the "controls" that Dean Bridgman Conner was in a lunatic asylum kept by one Dr. Cintz. They minutely described the place and its situation near the city of Puebla.

Mr. Philpott, who tells the story, was on the staff of *The Boston Globe*. He had once tracked a missing man to his lair; he believed in Mrs. Piper, hence he was sent in search of Conner. But he could find no lunatic asylum, no Dr. Cintz, and no news of Conner, so he travelled to Mexico, went straightway to the hospital, and learned that both the doctor and the nurse who attended Conner had left. Her name was Smith, which did not make search easier, but he was afterwards told that she had married a one-armed man who owned a hacienda at Tuxpan. Thither he went, and interviewed the nurse, who confirmed the fact that Conner had died of fever in the hospital.

On Mr. Philpott's return to Boston, Dr. Hodgson would not believe him, and said that "if he had the means he would go to Mexico and find Conner—alive—and bring him back to his father and mother." On this the proprietor of *The Boston Globe* offered to pay his expenses and advertised the offer, but Dr. Hodgson did not go to Mexico.

Mr. J. A. Hill's naïve comment is that "the Conner case, therefore, with all its mistakes, does not invalidate the true things that constitute good evidence for survival in other parts of Mrs. Piper's experience."¹

It's the old, old story. Directly any test on which a practical issue hangs is applied, the bladder

¹ *Psychical Investigations*, p. 208.

collapses, but only, as the whole history of spiritualism shows, to be blown again.¹

Dr. Hodgson's attitude is explicable. In his report on Mrs. Piper, published in 1898, he said: "I cannot profess to have any doubt but that the chief 'communicators' to whom I have referred are veritably the personalities that they claim to be, that they have survived the change we call death, and that they have directly communicated with us, whom we call living, through Mrs. Piper's entranced organism." He died suddenly, and only eight days passed before his "control" came into touch (that is, if it had ever left it) with Mrs. Piper. Obviously her many years of close intimacy with him and resulting knowledge of him make the communications and information acquired from him, which he purports to send, of little or no evidential value. There is no need to give examples. In his Report on the Piper-Hodgson control in the twenty-third volume of the *Proceedings of the S. P. R.*, June, 1909,

¹ A legal friend, Mr. E. S. P. Haynes, recently asked Sir Oliver Lodge (whom he knew slightly) to introduce him to a high-class medium through whom he could be put into communication with his deceased father and another solicitor, who also had "passed over." The reason was that in the absence of documents to throw light on transactions which were within the knowledge of the two, a service would be rendered by getting at the facts through them. The request, therefore, was made in all seriousness, and by a man who keeps an open mind on the genuineness of psychical research. Sir Oliver referred my friend to the editor of *Light*, the official organ of Spiritualism, who replied in dexterous terms that "it is unwise to depend on the judgment of the inhabitants of *another* sphere of existence regarding matters solely relating to *this* and which we earth-dwellers ought to settle for ourselves." Moreover, that "the power of communication is at present so very improperly developed that it would be most unsafe to frame one's course of action on the counsel we might mistakenly suppose they wished to give us."

Professor William James says that "Hodgson had often, during his lifetime, laughingly said that if he ever passed over and Mrs. Piper was still officiating here below, he would control her better than she had ever yet been controlled in her trances, because he was so thoroughly familiar with the difficulties and conditions on this side." Here is Professor James's verdict: the verdict of a psychologist who had Mrs. Piper under close observation for a quarter of a century, and who admitted a bias towards the spiritualistic hypothesis:

"The contents of the Hodgson material is no more veridical than is a lot of earlier Piper material, especially in the days of the old Phinuit control. And it is, as I began by saying, vastly more leaky and susceptible of naturalistic explanation than is any body of Piper material recorded before."

To sum up the impressions resulting from study of the records of Mrs. Piper's deliverances in her "trance states," so far as these are of the genuine clairvoyant type, charges of deliberate fraud may not be admissible. Here we are on the confines of the abnormal: much, long hidden in the recesses of subconsciousness, may then reappear in fantastic shapes, such as visit us in dreams. Psychology takes count of this and other abnormalities and explains them. It is only where the supernormal is assumed as cause that the debateable comes in. Are Mrs. Piper's deliverances of a nature which can be accounted for only as parts of what Sir Conan Doyle calls "a new revelation"? Is she among the privileged few to whom discarnate spirits tell the secrets of the Eternal? If so, the cryptic is marvellously

covered by the commonplace. Certainly, as the Conner case exemplifies, she failed to discover a secret of the temporal.

Mr. Podmore, whose prolonged study and analysis of psychical phenomena constituted him the chief authority on their validity, says that "Mrs. Piper's trance utterances and writings are admitted both by believers in spiritualism and by telepathists to form almost the most important part of the evidence on which they rely to support their respective hypotheses." His conclusion is that they "do not obviously call for any supernormal explanation." The instances which seem to point to some external source of inspiration are neither sufficiently numerous nor sufficiently free from ambiguity to warrant any such inference. "The information given by her trance personality is very generally incomplete, or of uncertain meaning, and needs expert interpretation. I cannot point to a single instance in which a precise and unambiguous piece of information has been furnished of a kind which could not have proceeded from the medium's own mind working upon the materials provided and the hints let drop by the sitters."¹ "She is vague about dates: she prefers to give Christian names rather than surnames; and of Christian names the commoner rather than the more out-of-the-way: she rarely attempts to give descriptions of houses or places, and her attempts in this direction are commonly failures. In other words, she is weakest precisely where the pseudo-medium is most successful. Her real strength lies in describing the diseases [Phinuit often played the

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., pp. 344, 345.

rôle of a medical adviser], personal idiosyncrasies, thoughts, feelings and character of the sitter and his friends: their loves, hates, quarrels, sympathies, and mutual relationships in general: trivial but significant incidents in their past histories and the like.”¹ As my wife remarks, while men have more ability and persistence in hunting out information, women are quicker to interpret significances in voice, manner and appearance; they read character more easily. Emotions betray themselves more readily to them than to men.

The late Andrew Lang, who confessed that he had “the will to believe in an unusual degree,”² said that, for him, “the interest of Mrs. Piper is purely anthropological. She exhibits a survival or recrudescence of savage phenomena, real or feigned, of convulsion and of sensory personality, and entertains a survival of the animistic explanation.” He does “not impeach her normal character. But ‘secondary personalities’ have often more of Mr. Hyde than of Dr. Jekyll in their composition.”³

Psychical Researchers will agree that the reports of spirits and their doings among barbaric races, made by travellers and missionaries, have evidential value, although perhaps of a low grade. The “controls,” to whose communications believers in the occult give ear and record, have no limitations as to clime, race, sex or age; and those to whom they bring reassuring messages that the discarnate

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 341.

² Discussing the matter with him one afternoon at the Savile Club, he said, somewhat in jest, but more in earnest: “I don’t believe, but I tremble.”

³ *The Making of Religion*, p. 150.

spirit "being dead, yet speaketh," must desire every bereaved fellow-creature to enjoy the like consolation. They must also desire to increase the body of data on which their conclusions rest; hence, they should establish branches of their Society wherever the materials which it was founded to collect and compare exist.

VIII

MRS. LEONARD AND OTHERS

RAYMOND LODGE, youngest son of Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, was killed by shrapnel in the attack on Hooze Hill in Flanders on the 14th September, 1915. The news of his death reached his family three days later. In August, 1914, a Mrs. Kennedy wrote to Sir Oliver Lodge (who was then in Australia) informing him that she had recently lost a son named Paul, from whom she had daily received communications through automatic writing, and, because of Sir Oliver's "investigations into spirit life," asking his help to remove her scepticism about the genuineness of her power as an automatist. Sir Oliver, on his return, took Mrs. Kennedy "anonymously and unexpectedly" to an American "direct voice" medium, Mrs. Wriedt, who performed the easy task of removing her doubts. Other mediums contributed to that happy issue—among these Mr. Vout Peters and Mrs. Osborne Leonard. Mrs. Kennedy was on intimate terms with both, and introduced Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge to them, not disclosing their names, so it is said. They nursed the idea that they were unknown to these mediums! On seeing the announcement of the death of Raymond Lodge, Mrs. Kennedy spoke to her departed son, "and asked him to

help; she also asked for a special sitting with Mrs. Leonard for the same purpose, though without saying why.”¹ On the 18th September her own hand automatically wrote as from Paul: “I am here. . . . I have seen that boy, Sir Oliver’s son; he’s better and has had a splendid rest, tell his people.” Four days later, he sends another message: “I shall bring Raymond to his father when he comes to see you.” At her request Mrs. Leonard arranged to give a sitting on the 25th following to Lady Lodge, and to a French lady who had lost both her sons. The names of the sitters were withheld. The three ladies sat round a table, which tilted in the usual responsive way as each letter of the alphabet was spoken by the medium, stopping at the moment when the right letter was reached. At this séance the most interesting answer that purported to come from Raymond was: “Tell father I have met some friend of his.” “Any name?” “Yes, Myers.” The rest of the talk was commonplace. Two days afterwards Sir Oliver had his first sitting with Mrs. Leonard. He went, he tells us, “as a complete stranger,” only saying that he was a friend of Mrs. Kennedy. He guilelessly adds: “I lay no stress on my anonymity, however,” and he writes as if it were possible for so well-known a man, whose commanding figure and benevolent face is so familiar, whose photograph is in the shop windows, and whose reputation as a spiritualist is world-wide, to preserve that anonymity. *Sancta simplicitas!* Why, directly the news of Raymond Lodge’s death was spread abroad, every medium in the country was on

¹ *Raymond*, p. 119.

the alert, hoping to be the favoured chosen one of a visit from his parents. And at the séance given by Mrs. Leonard to Lady Lodge the Frenchwoman let slip her ladyship's name! Sir Oliver was informed by Mrs. Leonard that her "guide" or "control" was a young Indian girl named Fedá,¹ who calls Raymond "Zaymond," he in return calling her "Illustrious One": Paul Kennedy calls her "Imp." Mr. Vout Peters has three controls: "Moonstone," who in this life was a "Yogi" and who was a hundred years old when he crossed to the Beyond, and who passes on a message from W. T. Stead; "Red-feather," who talks broken English; and "Biddy," an old Irish washerwoman, who lived next a church. Addressing Mrs. Kennedy, Biddy said: "You don't realise that the world is governed by chains and that you are one of the links; one of my chains is to help mothers." She was clearly not in sympathy with the old charwoman whose one desire on arriving in the Beyond was

"To sit on the banks of that beautiful river,
And never do nothing for ever and ever."

We have the testimony of the American, Madame Brockway—"psychist," as she describes herself—who was recently fined fifty pounds and thirty guineas costs and recommended for expulsion, that Peters is "London's Premier Psychic."

Prior to any séances, early in September, Sir Oliver Lodge received from Mrs. Piper the original

¹ We are not told on what principle the spirits choose their "controls." But they favour little Indian girls. Miss Wood had Pocha, Mrs. Piper has Chlorine, and now comes Fedá.

script of a message received on the 8th August from Myers to her via Richard Hodgson as control, a Miss Robbins being present. It ran as follows:—

“RICHARD HODGSON. Now, Lodge, while we are not here as of old, *i.e.* not quite, we are here enough to take and give messages. Myers says you take the part of the poet and he will act as Faunus.

MISS ROBBINS. Faunus?

RICHARD HODGSON. Yes, Myers. *Protect*. He will understand. What have you to say, Lodge? Good work. Ask Verrall, she will also understand. Arthur says so. [This means Dr. Arthur W. Verrall, deceased.—O. J. L.]

MISS ROBBINS. Do you mean Arthur Tennyson? [She confused Alfred Tennyson with Verrall.]

RICHARD HODGSON. No. Myers knows.”

This implies that Myers had premonition of Raymond's death six weeks before it happened.

Thereupon Sir Oliver wrote to Mrs. Verrall (since deceased), who knew her Horace, asking: “Does *the Poet and Faunus* mean anything to you? Did one protect the other?” Set on the quest, and, perhaps, carrying in her memory certain Horatian allusions in Mr. Myers's poem on “Immortality” printed in his posthumous *Fragments of Prose and Poetry*, she replied that “the reference is to Horace's account of his narrow escape from death, from a falling tree,

which he ascribes to the intervention of Faunus"¹ (a vegetation god and guardian of poets). Sir Oliver's comment is that a blow upon him was impending, from which Myers would protect him, and that he himself had a dim recollection of some impending catastrophe, "perhaps of a financial rather than of a personal kind."² He makes much to turn on that construing of *levasset* as meaning that Faunus weakened or checked the blow, and suggests that the message from Myers meant that "he had redeemed his 'Faunus' promise and had lightened the blow by looking after and helping Raymond on the other side." Horace says that Faunus averted the death-stroke from him, but Raymond was killed! *Cadit quæstio*. However, Sir Oliver, clutching at any explanation of the Faunus message that points to Myers's intervention to "protect," finds verification when "Feda" tells him that she sees a dark cross falling on Sir Oliver, and then turning its bright side on him.³ Mrs. Piper and Sir Oliver are close friends, and her thoughts may well have wandered towards him and the son to whom death might come at any moment. Mrs. Piper's antecedents

¹ *Odes*, II., xvii., 27-30.

"Me truncus illapsus cerebro
Sustulerat, nisi Faunus ictum
Dextra levasset, Mercurialium
Custos virorum."

"Me the curst trunk that smote my skull
Had slain, but Faunus, strong to shield
The friend of Mercury, check'd the blow
In mid descent."

(Conington's trans.)

² An explanation of this may possibly be found in a financial article in *Truth* of 17th January, 1917.

³ *Raymond*, p. 92.

were humble; presumably, she is not a classical scholar, but the utterance of scraps of knowledge in foreign tongues which have passed unheeded into subconsciousness is not unusual. During her first visit to England she frequently met Myers, and the lines from Horace may have been quoted by him in conversation. When she came here in 1906 to throw light, if possible, on the problem of cross-correspondence, there were many references both to Horace and to Myers's poems in her presence.¹ She is one of several automatists who profess to have received communications from Myers. He cannot be said to have passed to his *rest*: dying in January, 1901, in less than a month after that he was sending messages through the control Nelly, a baby daughter of a trance medium named Mrs. Thompson. In the following May he complained: "They keep on calling me. Do appeal to them not to break me up so. When Mr. Myers wants to go to sleep and be quiet, mother will not let him. She will call him. You must tell her so."

Here it may be opportune to insert copy of a letter from Mrs. Myers which appeared in *The Morning Post* of the 24th October, 1908:

SPIRITUALISTIC MESSAGES

(To the Editor of *The Morning Post*)

SIR,—For some time papers and periodicals have been drawing the attention of the public to various

¹ *The Newer Spiritualism*, p. 210, and cf. *Ibid.*, p. 261.

spiritualistic messages purporting to come from my husband, the late F. W. H. Myers. My son and I wish to state, in reply to many inquiries we have received, that after a very careful study of all the messages we have found nothing which we can consider of the smallest evidential value. Yours, etc.,
EVELEEN MYERS.

2 RICHMOND TERRACE, WHITEHALL,
23rd October.

Surely wife and children would be the first to have messages from their beloved one. Added to this there is the well-known, damning fact that cannot be too widely known, how Myers left behind him, in the care of the Society for Psychical Research, a sealed letter written in 1891, the contents of which Mrs. Verrall as medium believed that she could reveal. When the seal was broken on the 13th December, 1904, three years after his death, there was found to be no resemblance between the contents of the letter and Mrs. Verrall's automatic script which purported to contain a communication from the discarnate Myers. Sir Oliver suggested that Myers may have forgotten what he had written in the envelope: as if he could have forgotten that which, at his own initiative, was to be the crucial test of the survival of his personality! A second test case is that of the *soi-disant* Hannah Wild, who on several occasions dictated what professed to be the contents of a sealed letter written by the real Hannah Wild before her death, for the express

purpose of the test; and all these versions were entirely wide of the mark.¹

In the afternoon of the same day, 27th September, 1915, Lady Lodge, nursing the delusion that she was "a complete stranger," had her first sitting with "the well-known London medium," Mr. Vout Peters, at Mrs. Kennedy's house. "When Mr. Peters goes into a trance, his personality is *supposed* to change to that of another man, who, we understand, is 'Moonstone,' much as Mrs. Piper was controlled by *apparent* personalities calling themselves 'Phinuit,' 'Rector,' and others. When Mr. Peters does not go into a trance he has *some clairvoyant faculty* of his own."² The notes of this "important sitting," as Sir Oliver calls it, are given in full, and except in one matter, which he regards as evidential, the talk is dreary, unilluminating commonplace.

"'You have,' says 'Moonstone,' 'several portraits of this boy. Two where he is alone, and one where he is in a group of other men. He is particular that I should tell you of this. In one you see his walking-stick.' ('Moonstone' here put an imaginary stick under his arm.)"³ The family, of course, had portraits of Raymond, but not as one of a group: here Moonstone blundered. However, in the following November a Mrs. Cheves wrote to Lady Lodge offering to send her a photograph of a group of officers taken abroad in the previous August, in which Raymond Lodge appears. Before

¹ *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 306. Quoted from *Proc. S.P.R.* Vol. viii., pp. 10-15.

² *Raymond*, p. 128. The italics, emphasising the vagueness, are mine.

³ *Raymond*, p. 133.

it reached him, Sir Oliver had a sitting with Mrs. Leonard (on the 3rd December), when he put a number of "leading" questions about the photograph to Feda, one of these being: "Did he have a stick?"

FEDA. "He doesn't remember that. He remembers that somebody wanted to lean on him, but he is not sure if he was taken with some one leaning on him. But some one wanted to lean on him he remembers."

The photograph arrived on the 7th December. In front of a wooden shed are seen twenty-four soldiers in three rows; Raymond is one of five in the front; his stick or cane lies across his feet—every officer carries his cane—one of the group in the second row appears to have his hand on Raymond's shoulder. Three photographs had been taken; each is reproduced in *Raymond*: in all of them, as might be expected in a group photograph, the officers are more or less leaning on one another.

In the other answers "Feda" fumbles along, trusting to the next question to help her to a clue. She talks of the group as "a mixed lot"; they could not well be otherwise; she blunders over the names of officers who are not in it, and so forth. But no discrepancies can disturb Sir Oliver's convictions; in "the evidential value of the whole communication" he sees "something of the nature of cross-correspondence of a simple kind in the fact that a reference to the photograph was made through one medium and a description given, *in answer to a question* [the italics are mine], through an independent one." The plain man in the street sees no

evidential value—*i.e.* proof of Raymond Lodge's survival—in a medium guessing that a group of officers should be photographed in the open, with canes in their hands.

Among the communications which Sir Oliver discreetly classes as "rather evidential" is that from Feda about a peacock in the garden at Mariemont which was drolly named "Mr. Jackson," and which had tumbled down and broken its neck. Sir Oliver gives Feda a lead by asking (the question is addressed through her to Raymond): "Do you remember a bird in our garden?" "Perhaps," he naïvely adds, "it was unfortunate that I had mentioned a bird first." (It certainly was, because it "gave away the whole show" to the medium.) Feda makes some bad shots; "she got rather bewildered"; then follows a further question: "Well, we will go on to something else now: I don't want to bother him about birds. Ask him does he remember Mr. Jackson?" Feda: "Yes, going away, going away, he says . . . fine bird, put him on a pedestal." The bird, Sir Oliver says, was stuffed and mounted on a wooden stand. "If this," he adds, "was not telepathy from me, it seems to show a curious knowledge of what is going on at his [Raymond's] home." It does: but family pets are often stuffed—and so, it would seem, are their owners, by mediums! What hindered the mediums from keeping themselves in touch with all the happenings at Mariemont? They were all on the scent.

So much for the inferences from the Faunus "message," the group photograph, and "Mr. Jack-

son.”¹ It seems scarcely worth while to summarise detailed reports of communications at sittings which Sir Oliver and the various members of his family held with Mr. Peters and Mrs. Leonard: the more so as the same importance is not attached to them as to the three “evidential” cases just dealt with. In truth, they make dreary and often repellent reading, and warrant the apology which sometimes Sir Oliver offers for them as “only partially satisfactory.” The happenings at the later sésances are deprived of any value by the fact that the sitters were known to the mediums. Sometimes the mediums as vehicles of communication are dispensed with. The comment why there is ever any occasion to employ these “middlemen” suggests itself. Sir Oliver tells us that he and his family had private sésances at their own home, when, occasionally, “the table got rather rampageous and had to be quieted down: sometimes it and things like flower-pots got broken.” At one sitting, which was opened with silent prayer, the table made amorous attempts “to get into Lady Lodge’s lap; made most caressing movements to and fro, and seemed as if it could not get close enough to her.”²

Space may be given to a few specimens of the communications made easier, so “Moonstone” says, because **“NOT ONLY IS THE PARTITION SO THIN THAT YOU CAN HEAR THE OPERATIONS ON THE OTHER SIDE, BUT A BIG HOLE HAS BEEN MADE.”**

¹ Mr. Walter Cook’s *Reflections on Raymond* supplies, in compendious form, a destructive analysis of the “evidence” from which Sir Oliver Lodge draws momentous conclusions.

² *Raymond*, p. 217.

(Printed in capitals in *Raymond*.¹) "A remarkably evidential and identifying message," is Sir Oliver's comment, because, as he points out, it is parallel with "a tunnel-boring simile" in his *Survival of Man*.² This "evidential" message came through Mr. Vout Peters, who, of course, had not read that book!

Evidence as to the continued interest of the incarnate in mundane affairs is supplied by Raymond through "Feda." He mourns over the defection of Greece, prophesies victory for Russia and realises "the seriousness sometimes of this war." He promises his mother that he will be with them at Christmas, and in answer to her wonderment how he gets his clothes he says:

"They are all man-u-fac-tured. (Feda stumbling over long words.³) Can you fancy you see me in white robes? Mind, I didn't care for them at first, and I wouldn't wear them. Just like a fellow gone to a country where there's a hot climate—an ignorant fellow! . . . Apparently, as far as I can gather, the rotting wool appears to be used for making things like tweeds on our side. But I know I am jumping; I'm guessing at it. My suit, I expect, was made from decayed worsted on your side." [In a footnote to this Sir Oliver naïvely says: "I have not yet traced the source of all this supposed information." Doubtless, if he will call again at Maida Vale, Mrs. Leonard can supply it.]

¹ P. 100.

² P. 234. (1915 edition.)

³ *Raymond*, p. 189. She does not stumble over "acclimatised," which follows immediately after, she quickly learns to pronounce "manufacture" correctly (p. 199) and talks of "long orations" (p. 160).

"My body's very similar to the one I had before. I pinch myself sometimes to see if it's real, and it is, but it doesn't seem to hurt as much as when I pinched the flesh body. The internal organs don't seem constituted on the same lines as before. . . . Oh, there's one thing," he says. "I have never seen anybody bleed."

SIR OLIVER. Has he got eyes and ears?

FEDA. Yes, yes, and eyelashes and eyebrows, exactly the same, and a tongue and teeth. He has got a new tooth now in place of another one he had. . . . He knew a man that had lost an arm, but he has got another one. Yes, he has got two arms now. He seemed as if without a limb when first he entered the astral. . . . I am told that when any one's blown to pieces, it takes some time for the spirit body to complete itself, to gather itself all in and to be complete.¹

O. J. L. What about bodies that are burnt?

FEDA. Oh, if they get burnt by accident, if they know about it on this side, they detach the spirit first. What we call a spirit doctor comes round and helps. . . . We have terrible trouble sometimes over people who are cremated too soon; they shouldn't be. There are men here and women here . . . there don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane; they don't have them here. . . . People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day who *would* have a cigar. 'That's finished them,' he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to

¹ Pp. 194, 195.

provide that. But there are laboratories over here, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences, and ethers, and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He didn't try one himself, because he didn't care to; you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think so much of it; he had four altogether; and now he doesn't look at one.¹ Some call for whisky sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. But when they have had one or two, they don't seem to want it so much."²

Evidently Havana cigars and potable whisky spoiled the palate for celestial products. The savage method of supplying tobacco to the discarnates, as exemplified in the following incident, shows more consideration, and no mean ethical code. At the funeral of a Chookteha woman a man drove furiously to the spot, "leaped from the sledge before it stopped and gave a packet to her son, saying something which I did not hear. Afterwards I found that the man had owed some tobacco to a friend, who died before the loan was repaid, and the borrower now availed himself of this opportunity to return the tobacco by the old woman." Her body, the sledge which bore it and her household chattels, and the deer that dragged it were all placed on the funeral pile, the spirit of the tobacco ascending with her own.³

¹ P. 197.

² P. 198.

³ *In Far N.E. Siberia*, p. 145. By I. W. Shklovsky.

The communications take a graver turn when, at a séance given by Mrs. Kennedy to Sir Oliver, he asks: "Before you go, Raymond, I want to ask a serious question. Have you been let to see Christ?"

"Father, I shall see Him presently. It is not time yet. I am not ready. But I know He lives, and I know He comes here. All the sad ones see Him if no one else can help them. Paul has seen Him: you see he had such a lot of pain, poor chap. I am not expecting to see Him yet, father. I shall love to when it's the time—Raymond."¹

In a later chapter headed "A Few More Records, with some Unverifiable Matter" we are told that Raymond, at a "strange and striking sitting" given to Lady Lodge, spoke thus through the little Indian "control":

"Mother, I went to a gorgeous place the other day."

"LADY LODGE. Where was it?"

"Goodness knows! I was permitted, so that I might see what was going on in the Highest Sphere. Generally the High Spirits come to us. I wonder if I can tell you what it looked like!" Sir Oliver Lodge omits "the description and the brief reported utterance which followed." His restraint is to be commended and imitated.

"I felt," Raymond continues, "exalted, purified, lifted up. I was kneeling, I couldn't stand up. I *wanted* to kneel. Mother, I thrilled from head to foot. He didn't come near me, and I didn't feel I wanted to go near him. Didn't feel I ought. The Voice was like a bell. I can't tell you what he was

dressed or robed in. All seemed a mixture of shining colours.”¹ And so it goes on for two more pages, which need not be quoted here. I prefer to follow Sir Oliver in making no comment on the “unverifiable matter.” He passes on to offer explanations of defects in Feda’s “style and grammar.” But grammar is not a strong point with the dwellers in the Beyond. When a sitter told the medium that he wished to communicate with Lindley Murray, the question was put: “Are you the spirit of that great grammarian?” The reply came: “It’s me.”

Mrs. Wriedt has a short-cut method of communication with the Beyond in dispensing with controls. She makes use of an aluminium trumpet which “assists the concentration of vibrations from those operating on the other side as a megaphone does between operators on the physical plane.” A few feet separate her from the sitter, near whom the trumpet is placed on the floor; the light is then switched off and the anxious inquirer sits “in the velvet-black darkness waiting for the unknown.” Mrs. Wriedt does not pass into any trance, but talks naturally; voices, sometimes mixed, as if two or more spirits are struggling to make themselves heard, speak from the trumpet; the answers to the questions put by the inquirer are sometimes a little “elusive, unsatisfying” at a first sitting, but at subsequent sittings they are more coherent: it is

¹ P. 231. Cf. Tuckett, p. 324. At a sitting given by Mrs. Piper at Sir Oliver Lodge’s, at which his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, were present, the spirit of his dead brother, Dr. Ted Thompson, answers through his control a question put by Mr. Thompson: “Do you ever see Christ?” “Occasionally we do, but not often: He is far superior to us, infinitely superior,” and so forth, to the same effect.

the old dodge—the medium needs time and opportunity to acquire the information that shall remove the scepticism aroused by “a single visit.” The spirits with whom Mrs. Wriedt gets into direct touch range from cardinals to clowns. Cardinal Newman is heard to utter a “Latin Benediction” and that master of vigorous and pellucid English speaks thus in cryptic tautology: “It seems to me that I put forth the wrong light, and it was quenched out as suddenly as I was quenched out, and I had to be quenched out so that it had to be quenched out.” Cecil Rhodes says that he is glad he “did not leave Stead his money.” Perhaps he has given Stead his reasons for this want of confidence; we are not told. One of the discarnates, Greyfeather, probably a Red Indian, says: “We heapy much glad to see you.” And the ubiquitous, whilom murdering, ruffian, John King, joins the séance singing, of course in trumpet tones, “Lead, Kindly Light.”

The spirit voices of relatives and friends are not easily recognisable, but for this, we are told, there is a perfectly common-sense explanation in the fact that the difference in tone of physical voices is due to the formation of the organs through which they operate, and these disintegrating as they do with the physical body, the voice to which we have been accustomed cannot be carried on into the new field of existence. Why only the voice should be affected by this change in the spiritual anatomy is not clear, since a lady to whom Mrs. Wriedt gave a sitting recognised an uncle “by the manner of his laugh.”¹

To sum up. The impression left after reading

¹ “The Great Problem.” *The London Magazine*, February, 1917.

the tedious, ambiguous and repellent "communications" which Sir Oliver Lodge and others believe to have come from a spirit world through the several controls—the little Indian girl, the yogi, the old washerwoman, and by the "direct voices" through trumpets—is only to deepen a conviction that they need no assumption of the supernormal to explain them. They are the utterances of Mrs. Leonard, Mr. Vout Peters, Mrs. Wriedt and the rest of the mediums, some of whom may, with a large charity, be credited with believing themselves to be the vehicles of "control" revelations, or, with less charity and more truth, be classed with the tricksters who "work the oracle" by muscle-reading, sham trances, skilful guessings aided by hints from the sitters and by tapping common or special sources of information. They are either dreamy neurotics or humbugs. "The amount of sophistication," Sir Oliver Lodge naïvely says, "varies according to the quality of the medium,"¹ and, it may be added, according to the gullibility of the consultant.

Sir W. F. Barrett's revised issue of his *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought*, under its new title of *On the Threshold of the Universe*, appeared when this book was nearly completed. It is advertised as "supplementing in a most striking manner the evidence adduced by Sir Oliver Lodge in *Raymond*"; hence comment upon it falls into place in this section. Sir William reminds his readers that he began investigation into "alleged supernormal phenomena" forty years ago, and that the result of the co-operation of one or two friends

¹ *Raymond*, p. 87.

in that investigation was the founding of the Society for Psychical Research in 1882. The candour which informs the present work is manifest in admission of the difficulties besetting a momentous subject. His general attitude is one of alternating belief and non-committal. As a Swedenborgian he does not subscribe to all the articles of the Spiritualist Creed without qualification. In 1886 he stated that, reviewing the numerous séances which he had attended during the previous fifteen years, he found that "by far the larger part of the results obtained had absolutely no evidential value in favour of Spiritualism; either the condition of total darkness forbade any trustworthy conclusions, or the results were nothing more than could be explained by a low order of juggling. A few cases, however, stand out as exceptions."¹ One "exception," apparently, is not thus explained. Forty-one years ago Sir William satisfied himself that only by the action of "an unseen intelligence" could be explained a series of raps, scratchings and movements of tables which occurred whenever a ten-year-old girl was present. And that nothing has shaken his credulity, despite the report of his own Society condemning the poltergeists as a group of mischievous hussies (see *ante*, p. 86), is evidenced in his remark that "no doubt whatever rests in his own mind as to the reality and supernormal character of these utterly meaningless phenomena."² He prepares his readers for further admissions. "I believe," he says, "that Slade had genuine supernormal powers." He shares Sir William Crookes's belief in Home's

¹ P. 36.² P. 80.

"enormous elongation," finding confirmation of this in a similar phenomenon occurring among the Neoplatonists,¹ while the records of levitation of holy men and women further satisfy him that Home accomplished the same miracle.

Concerning this and other "almost incredible phenomena," Sir William Barrett says: "Since they occurred I have been assured by Sir William Crookes that no subsequent criticism has failed to shake [more correctly, has shaken] his opinion of their supernormal character, the elaborate precautions he took preventing the possibility of any fraud. Moreover, Sir William Crookes, in his Presidential Address to the British Association in 1898, had the courage to state in reference to these investigations he had nothing to retract and that he adhered to the statements he had published."² The "almost incredible phenomena" are set forth by Sir William Barrett in schedule form, of which the following is a summary. It may be headed—

SIR WILLIAM CROOKES'S CREDO

1. I believe that raps and sounds varying in loudness from ticks to thuds to be caused by an unseen intelligence.
2. That light and heavy bodies can be moved without visible cause or the contact of any human being.
3. That bodies can alter their weight.
4. That D. D. Home was raised completely off the ground.
5. That musical instruments can be played without human hands and in a way impossible to be played by normal means.
6. That luminous clouds condense into perfectly formed hands which presently fade away.
7. That intelligent messages are written by unseen hands.
8. That red-hot coals can be handled without injury.
9. "Most astonishing of all,"³ that "under elaborate test conditions

¹ P. 73.

² P. 55.

³ "It remains to this day absolutely inexplicable" (!). P. 87.

a materialised and beautiful female figure several times appeared clothed in a white robe, so real, that not only was its pulse taken, but it was repeatedly photographed, sometimes by the aid of the electric arc light, and on one occasion simultaneously with and beside the entranced medium.

Possibly the phenomenon of ventriloquism explains Sir William Barrett's hesitation to accept as genuine the "direct voice" communications of "a well-known American medium,"¹ who may be identified with Mrs. Wriedt, and he leaves "the question of spirit photographs an open one," though showing leanings towards their "veridical character." He hesitates to discard what the late Mr. Stead and Dr. A. R. Wallace accepted. A like hesitation attends his verdict on the "notorious medium," Eusapia Palladino, because so "competent an investigator" as the late "eminent criminologist, Professor Lombroso, and the neurologist, Professor Morselli, were convinced of the genuineness of the extraordinary phenomena they witnessed."² An appendix is allotted to an account of these, of which the reader, probably, has had more than enough already. As for Cesare Lombroso, he went *per saltum* from one extreme to another. Two days before his death (in 1909) there appeared an English translation of his last book, *After Death—What?* in which he tells us that after "making it the indefatigable pursuit of a lifetime to defend the thesis that every force is a property of matter and the soul an emanation of the brain," his neuropathological practice compelled reconsideration of the relation of mind to body, and resulted in his acceptance of all the phenomena of spiritualism, both

¹ P. 86.

² P. 67.

physical and psychical, as genuine. He swallowed the lot at a gulp, from table raps to materialisation of the departed, spirit photographs and spirit voices; every story, old or new, alike from savage and civilised sources, confirming his will to believe. He accepted, though only at second-hand, the story that a babe named Yenker gave replies to raps when two months old; of another wonder-child who "wrote automatically when nine days old," and of "Camisard babes of fourteen or fifteen months—even while still sucklings—preaching with the purest diction." The legends of holy babes, future saints, who refused to take milk from their mother's breasts on Fridays and on other fasting days, pale before marvels in which the credulous professor, and those whose credulity he has strengthened, will see fulfilment of the Psalmist's words: "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength."¹

In the semi-obscurity of a red light Eusapia redeemed her promise to Lombroso that he should see his mother. There detached itself from the curtain of the medium's cabinet a short, veiled figure, which came near him and whispered in his ear, "*Cesar, fio mio.*" "This," he says, "was not her habitual expression, which, when she met me, was *mio fol*, but the mistakes in expression made by the apparitions of the deceased are well known, and how they borrow from the language of the psychic and of the experimenters. Removing the veil from her face for a moment, she gave me a kiss."

Allowing for differences in detail, this suggests a story which Sir William Barrett quotes as among

¹ Ps. viii., 2.

“some remarkable instances where the dying person appears to see and recognise some of his deceased relatives and friends.” While at the bedside of a Mr. James Moore, who lay at the point of death, Dr. Wilson, of New York, says that “something happened which is utterly indescribable. Taking my hand in both of his, while he appeared perfectly rational and as sane as any man I have ever seen, the only way that I can express it is that he was transported into another world, and although I cannot satisfactorily explain the matter to myself, I am fully convinced that he had entered the golden city—for he said in a stronger voice than he had used since I had attended him: ‘There is mother! Why, mother, have you come here to see me? No, no, I am coming to see you. Just wait, mother, I am almost over. Wait, mother, wait, mother!’”

While Sir William admits that “one cannot always attach much weight” to this sort of evidence, the citation of the story commits him to the conclusion, vague as this may be, that there is something in it. It has no evidential value whatever, and is all of a piece with the many stories which have their explanation in hallucinations of the dying. Precious to me above all memories is that of my brave, bright, beautiful-souled mother, hope of reunion with whom I would joyfully nurture were there grounds for it. She is often in my thoughts; her portrait hangs near me, and it may be that if delirium accompanies my death, a vision as of her may appear, and then, perchance, an outburst of triumphant words escape my dying lips which on-lookers, if such there be, might construe as evidence

that mother and son have met on "the threshold of the Unseen." As not without bearing on this, I rarely get quickly to sleep, and, to invite it, I often recite long passages from Scripture and hymns learnt in boyhood, and poems with a religious flavour—*e.g.* Leigh Hunt's *Abou ben Adhem*. I may do this "in the hour and article of death," but no warrant should be drawn therefrom that I returned at the last to a belief abandoned years ago when the mind was unclouded.¹

While Sir William Barrett has no hesitation in pronouncing that Eusapia "is a medium of a low moral type," and refuses to have anything to do with her, no such reluctance attaches to his opinion of the Rev. Stainton Moses. Of that medium's "sanity and honesty," and as a man "wholly incapable of deceit," Sir William has no doubt. Moses "experienced levitation no less than ten times," and that phenomenon was manifested by "a large, very heavy mahogany dining-table" in his house. Sir William would do well to read a chapter in Mr. Maskelyne and Dr. Weatherly's *The Supernatural?* in which is explained the trick of lifting heavy furniture performed some years back by the "Magnetic Lady."²

* He tells us that, in 1899, the "Moses of old" purported to communicate with Mrs. Piper, starting with forebodings of wars to come, and then adding "a good deal of solemn twaddle." Concerning that lady, he frankly tells this story: "A Dr. Stanley Hall asked her if his niece, Bessie Beals, could com-

¹ Cf. *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, p. 130. By Henry Maudsley, M.D.

² Pp. 274-288.

municate. She professed to come, and gave various messages at several sittings. But she had never existed, Dr. Hall having given a fictitious name and relationship.”¹ Sir William naïvely says: “Thus it will be seen that we cannot take these communications at their face value, as they are sometimes manifestly false.” Then he hedges. “They probably represent phases of the hypnotic self of Mrs. Piper, created by some verbal or telepathic suggestion from the mind of the sitter.” After this it seems scarcely worth while to seriously discuss his contention that Mrs. Piper is the vehicle of communications from the discarnate spirits of Dr. Hodgson and Mr. Myers. His usual candour forsakes him in his silence about the sealed letter which Mr. Myers left behind him.

As a study in logomachy, in “darkening counsel by words,” Sir William’s attempted definition of mediumistic power supplies example. “The nexus between the seen and the unseen may be physical, physiological, or psychical, but whichever it may be, it is a specialised substance, or organ, or organism . . . it is doubtless a peculiar *psychical* state that confers mediumistic power, but we know nothing of its nature, and we often ruin our experiment and lose our results by our ignorance. . . .”² The phenomenon of materialisation of a part, or of the whole body, is termed “*ectoplasy*, by which is meant the power of forming outside the body of the medium a concentration of vital energy, or vitalised matter, which operates temporarily in the same way as the body from which it is drawn; so that visible, audible

¹ *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 240.

² P. 120.

or tangible, human-like phenomena are reproduced.”¹ Let those who can make sense of all this, as of kindred hypotheses by which an assumption is sought to be proved. “Intuitive certainty,” says Froude, “is beyond the reach of argument.”²

However, Sir William shows some return to a rational consideration of the matter in the recognition that an entranced medium “is not in a normal condition, but shows evidence of hysteria . . .”³ that the messages often spring from, and are invariably influenced by, the medium’s own subconscious life,⁴ “so that it would be rash to infer that they proceed from a discarnate human personality,”⁵ and that, “in fact, ‘psychical research’ in general deals with the varied manifestations and operations of the unconscious part of our personality.”⁶ The evolved is the involved: *Nihil est in intellectus quod non prius in sensu fuerit*. Sensation is the raw material of thought.

The book abounds with so many “hedging” qualifications and irreconcilable assessments of so-called spiritual phenomena that there will be no surprise occasioned to learn that, in Sir William Barrett’s judgment, “the inference commonly drawn, that spirit communications teach us the necessary and inherent immortality of the soul, is a mischievous error. They show us that life can exist in the unseen, but entrance on a life after death does not necessarily mean *immortality*—i.e. eternal persistence of our personality—nor does it prove that survival

¹ P. 87.

² *History of England*. Vol. xii., p. 199. (Cabinet Edition.)

³ P. 123.

⁴ P. 33.

⁵ P. 326.

⁶ P. 134.

after death extends to *all*.”¹ How far Sir Oliver Lodge and other defenders of the faith will agree with this is here no matter of concern, but the suggestion of a selected number of immortals evokes the comment that, if the “controls” be among these, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest has no extension to a discarnate state. No “trailing clouds of glory from God who is our home” follow the motley group through whom not a single ennobling message has come; only nauseating drivel and banal inanity. In the quotation from the *Spirit Teachings* of Mr. Stainton Moses² we have a sample of the tawdry rhetoric on transcendental themes which fills kindred deliverances of other “seers” of the Lake Harris and Davis type. They invite the question: “Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?”³

¹ P. 287.

² See *ante*, p. 55.

³ Job xv. 2.

IX

CROSS-CORRESPONDENCE

ONE would have thought that, to those who believe in them, the spirits had given sufficient proof of their existence. But, apparently, these discarnates are not content, so they have devised a plan of supplying further evidence which appears to reflect small credit on their intelligence: it seems, in its confusion of nature, to be the outcome of psychical poltergeists. Perhaps it is their fun to relieve the monotony, and to bewilder friends "on this side." The plan is for the same spirit to send part of a message through one medium and the rest of it through another medium, these mediums often being thousands of miles apart and unknown to each other. It is then left to the interpreter to put the unintelligible parts together and make of them, as best they can, one intelligible whole. The method has been termed "cross-correspondence"; appropriately so, if by cross is meant confusion. The ingenuity which is necessary to the successful interpretation of such communications from the spirits, so as to make sense of nonsense, is of a sort compared to which the decipherment of the cipher which proves that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's dramas is child's play.

Sir Oliver Lodge calls this cross-correspondence "the most evidential class of utterance." He adds

that "the subject is so large and complicated that any one who wishes to form an opinion on it is bound to study the detailed publications by Mr. Piddington, Mrs. Verrall, Miss Johnson and others in recent volumes of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*. . . . The main feature of this kind of communication is that we are not required to study the phenomena exhibited by a single medium actuated by a number of ostensible controls, but, conversely, the utterance of one ostensible control effected through the contributory agency of several different mediums, each of whom writes automatically and independently of each other, and, at first, were unaware that any kind of correspondence was going on. In many cases, moreover, the messages, as separately obtained, were quite unintelligible and only exhibited a meaning when they were subsequently put together by another person."¹

A feature of the cross-correspondence is the numerous obscure literary and classical allusions which fill them, the identification of which needs the rarest erudition, and the explanations of which are to be found not in the scholarship of spirits, but in the subconscious intelligence of the automatist, as in the case of the late Mrs. Verrall, who was an excellent classicist. A passive condition of the will is induced: "Whether," says she, "I write in light or dark, I do not look at the paper. I perceive a word or two, but never understand whether it makes

¹ *Survival of Man*, pp. 222, 223. "If their assumed meaning be confirmed they have a value which can hardly be over-estimated."—Professor Barrett, *Psychical Research*, p. 230. "Ifs" and "assumptions" play a large part in the occult.

sense with what goes before. Under these circumstances, it will be seen that though I am aware at the moment of writing what language my hand is using, when the script is finished I often cannot say, till I read it, what language has been used, as the recollection of the words passes away with extreme rapidity.”¹

A paper on the “Ear of Dionysius” by the Rt. Hon. Gerald Balfour, published in the last-issued volume of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychological Research*, has been the subject of recent discussion in *The Times Literary Supplement*² and *The Saturday Westminster Gazette*.³ The conclusions arrived at by Mr. Balfour and others warrant reference to the contents of that paper.

On the 26th August, 1910, an automatist, whose pseudonym is “Mrs. Willett,” purported to have received from a discarnate source this bald message: “Dionysius’s Ear—the lobe.” Apparently its meaning was obscure to Mrs. Verrall, who is reported as being present, since her husband, Professor Verrall, expressed surprise at her ignorance. The reference is to the story that the Tyrant of that name was wont to sit near the prison-grotto in the Latomia quarries at Syracuse, which had a remarkable echo, so that he might hear what the Athenian prisoners were saying: hence its name: “L’Orecchio di Dionisio.” Mrs. Willett was allowed the ample period of three years and a half to brood over the significance of this communication, with the tenor

¹ *Proceedings S. P. R.* Vol. xx., part liii. “On a Series of Automatic Writings, by Mrs. A. W. Verrall.”

² 3rd April, 1917, and four following issues.

³ 12th May, 1917.

of which Professors Verrall and Butcher were made acquainted. Professor Verrall will be remembered by his fine study of *Euripides the Rationalist*, concerning which George Meredith wrote to me. "It is a key to the poet's contempt and loathing of the gods of his country." Professor Butcher will be best remembered as joint translator with Andrew Lang of the *Odyssey*, concerning which it was said that "Butcher turned it out of Greek and Lang turned it into English." Professor Butcher died in December, 1910, and Professor Verrall in June, 1912, each of them before Mrs. Willett had any further communications from the other side about the "Ear." These came to her in succession in January, February and March, 1914. They were full of classical allusions to nymphs, heroes and philosophers—Galatea, Ulysses, Aristotle and others, and psychical experts affirmed that they came from the two discarnate professors: so that there was not one discarnate, but three discarnates.

But of this jumble of incoherence the would-be interpreters who came to the aid of the bewildered, non-classical recipient, could make neither head nor tail. However, on the 2nd August, 1915—*five years* after the receipt of the first communication—there came to Mrs. Verrall this supplemental piece of information: "Cythera. Philox. He laboured in the stone quarries and drew upon the earlier writer for material for his Satire, Jealousy." There is nothing recondite about this. Dr. Smith's *Classical Dictionary* tells us that Philoxenus of Cythera was a distinguished Greek poet (435-380 B.C.) who was cast into the "Ear" prison by Dionysius because he

refused to revise one of the Tyrant's poems, bluntly telling him that the best way to correct it was to draw a black line through the whole of it. Light on the mention of Galatea in one of the communications to Mrs. Willett is thrown by an article on Philoxenus in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, wherein it is said that his masterpiece "was the *Cyclops*, a pastoral burlesque on the love of the Cyclops for the fair Galatea, written to avenge himself on Dionysius, who was wholly or partially blind of one eye." Among Mr. Verrall's books there was found a copy of a work by an American scholar on the *Greek Melic Poets*, which deals, among other authors, with Philoxenus, and of which Dr. Verrall made use in his lectures. In Mrs. Verrall's talks with her husband (she had studied and taught both Latin and Greek), gossip about that poet probably had place, and the curiosity which the first purported communication aroused in Mrs. Willett must have led to her looking up references and gathering scraps of classical lore from her learned co-automatist. Mr. Balfour asserts that the two had no communications on the subject, a statement hard to reconcile with what is known of the relations between people eager to solve a conundrum, and sharing a common belief. But Mrs. Verrall is no longer with us; both she and her husband—humorist as well as humanist—are beyond the marge of our inquiry, although what he would have said may be guessed at.

Psychical ingenuity has no limits, and while the comment of the sceptic on its toilsome results is, *Parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus*, the be-

liever, in the person of Mr. Balfour, affirms that "the communications have their sources in some intelligence or intelligences not in the body," and not—as is the true explanation—in the potential consciousness of the automatist, or, as has been suggested, by her looking up guide-books to Sicily and reading *The Fortunes of Nigel*. Sir William Barrett is satisfied as to the "positive evidence of an ability and wide classical knowledge quite beyond the power of the automatist. The cryptic allusions, it is true, need considerable ingenuity, learning and skill to make the evidence intelligible to ordinary minds. This recondite mode of communication may be adopted to prevent suspicion that the message is derived from terrene minds by telepathy, or other sources of error. Those who have not the necessary time or knowledge to unravel these mosaics of classical scholarship must rest content with the assurance that competent and unbiassed investigators have been convinced that they afford convincing evidence of the identity of the deceased persons from whom they profess to come."¹ Others there are who, after reading Mr. Balfour's paper, will agree with Sir Edward Brabrook: "I confess I hope for myself a better employment when I reach the discarnate condition than that of spending years in the attempt to communicate to my friends through an 'automatist' inconclusive evidences of imaginary erudition."²

The following throws light on the origin of the inconsequential rubbish that fills much of the cross-

¹ *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, p. 245.

² *Times Literary Supplement*, 3rd April, 1917.

correspondence to the bewilderment of the ordinary mind:—

“1 MARLOES ROAD, W.,

“October 22, 1908.

“DEAR CLODD,—The anthropologist gets as near his primitive man as he can, far enough away; and the psychist takes what evidence he gets to go to a jury. However, as you are rather too old a bird to learn a new tune (while the older bird tries to pick up the melodies as he goes along), here is a curious psychological game with nothing in it to shock the retrograde and obsolete. You make your mind as blank of conscious thought as you can and you wait for the *words*—rather than thoughts—that pop into your head. As one rapidly forgets, you write down every clause and wait for more. The result would make a boiled owl laugh. I found this out only to-day and have been giggling over the records. Do try it; one catches an aspect of one's nature hitherto veiled. As for you, as you see illusions hypnagogique the faces spoken of [I had told Lang that sometimes, before getting to sleep, a row of leering faces would pass before me], you are much more hallucinable than most people. I find that most people not only don't see them but don't believe that anybody does. This is the true scientific spirit. Bless you, I do not exclude wild animals, but we have evidence as to their psychic faculties. Dogs, one knows, and cats are highly psychical, but we have no companionship with tigers, etc.

“Yours sincerely,

“A. LANG.”

In *The Morning Post* of the same date he describes the experiment referred to in the above letter. He made his mind as blank as possible and watched for any words that floated into his consciousness. "These words," he says, "I wrote down. The results were very laughable. My own way of writing is not Johnsonian. But the style of my unpremeditated writings was full of long words. The first words almost that swam uncalled into my ken were, 'affability is the characteristic of the dawdling persecutor.' A longer 'message' began thus: 'Observing the down-grade tendency of the Sympneumatic currents, the Primate remarked that he could no longer regard Kafoozeleum as an aid to hortatory eloquence.'"

Sir E. B. Tylor quotes from Baron de Guldenstubbe's *Pneumatologie Positive*, in which he tells how the spirits dispense with the material aid of Mrs. Verrall and other automatists: "If pieces of blank paper are set out in suitable places, the spirits, enveloped in their ethereal bodies, will concentrate by their force of will electric currents on the paper and so form written characters. The Baron publishes a mass of facsimiles of spirit writings thus obtained. Julius and Augustus Cæsar give their names near their statues in the Louvre, Juvenal produces a ludicrous attempt at a copy of verses: Héloïse at Père-la-Chaise informs the world, in modern French, that Abelard and she are united and happy, and the Baron avers that Hippokrates attended him at his quarters in Paris and gave him a signature which of itself cured a sharp attack of rheumatism in a few minutes."¹

¹ *Primitive Culture*. Vol. i., p. 148.

X

THEOSOPHY: MADAME BLAVATSKY

ALTHOUGH the majority of Spiritualists disown the connection, their creed has affinities with that of Theosophists and of Christian Scientists. The foundress of the occult system called Theosophy was Helen Petrovna, daughter of a Russian colonel. She was married in 1848—when seventeen—to an elderly general named Blavatsky, from whom, after three months of boredom, she ran away. Of wanton, erratic and romantic nature, she started in quest of adventures, amorous and psychical, both of which, on her own confession, she found in plenty. From Hindu gurus, Egyptian thaumaturgists, Red Indian medicine-men and Voodoo sorcerers, she gathered a heap of miscellaneous experiences, out of which, later on, she evolved the farrago known as the Esoteric Philosophy or Wisdom Religion. Into this, Mrs. Besant says, she had been initiated in Tibet by a mysterious brotherhood of holy men, endowed with supernatural powers, living, like the gods of Lucretius, in “sacred, everlasting calm.” “They are,” the same authority adds, “living men who have evolved the spiritual nature until the physical body and brain consciousness have become ductile instruments for the spiritual intelligence, and who, by virtue of this evolution, are said to have gained a control over

natural forces which enables them to bring about results that appear to be miraculous. The possibility of this evolution and the nature of the powers inherent in the highly evolved man derive inevitably from the postulates of the Esoteric philosophy.”¹ The existence of these “Mahatmas,” as they are called, was not known in Tibet, so my friend, the late William Simpson, who was there in 1860, told me, and in his *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, Lieut.-Col. Waddell says: “Regarding the so-called Mahatmas, it was important to elicit the fact that this Buddhist Cardinal, one of the most learned and profound scholars in Tibet, was, like the other Lamas I have interrogated on the subject, entirely ignorant of any such beings.”² But this is to anticipate.

Madame Blavatsky has thrown some light on her mode of life for twenty-five years after her divorce. In a letter to Mr. Solovyoff, her dupe, and afterwards her detector, she said: “I will tell how from my eighteenth year I tried to get people to talk about me and say about me that this man and that was my lover and *hundreds* of them. . . . So there will be ‘the truth about H. P. Blavatsky’ in which psychology and *her own* and *others’* immorality and Rome and politics, and all *her own* and *others’* filth once more will be set out to God’s world. I shall conceal nothing. It will be a Saturnalia of the moral depravity of mankind, this *confession* of mine, a worthy epilogue of my stormy life.”³ On her own confession to a Mr. Atsakoff, written in 1874,

¹ *Chambers’s Encyclopædia*, Art., “Theosophy.” * P. 409.

² *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, pp. 178-181. Abridged and translated on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research from the Russian of V. S. Solovyoff, by Walter Leaf.

Madame Blavatsky had been a spiritualist for ten years, "and now," she added, "all my life is devoted to the doctrine."

She started as a medium in 1872 at Cairo, and until the autumn of 1875 maintained herself by giving séances and writing on Spiritualism. She then settled in New York, where her mediumistic powers developed as "astral projections." She gave sittings at the house of a brace of notorious mediums, the Eddy Brothers, where she met with the credulous Colonel Olcott, and, from the "Beyond," with the "pure spirit" of that hardy old rascal, John King, with whom we have already made acquaintance. Of him she said: "John King is a sufficient recompense for all: he is a host in himself." A temporary slump in Spiritualism gave her the chance of starting in the occult business on her own account, and, in conjunction with Colonel Olcott, she founded the Theosophist Society in New York in October, 1875. To its rooms there came other phantom visitors: John King gave place to Mahatmas transported thither from their secret mountain home in the Himalayas by means of their astral bodies, for the Brothers could levitate distances that David Douglas Home could not approach, and travel whither they chose. Colonel Olcott silenced a sceptic by producing as conclusive evidence a turban which a Mahatma had left behind him. The supernatural power of these holy men was further proven by their possession of a world-ether, named Akaz, by which wonders were wrought, chiefly as the vehicle of letters from Tibet to Madame Blavatsky. Under the title of *Isis Unveiled* she gave to the world in

1877 the new science and philosophy of which she elected herself High Priestess, declaring, with a modesty foreign to her nature, that she was "but the mouthpiece of a wisdom higher than her own"; the chosen medium of the Mahatmas. Their akasic force and other causes led her and Olcott to transfer the Society's quarters to India (first, in 1878, to Bombay and next, in 1882, to Adyar), where the Esoteric Philosophy with its fundamental creed—reincarnation of the Ego—breathed its native air. At Adyar there was set up in the occult room of the Theosophic temple a shrine which became the scene of miracles of varying value. It lacked the glory of adornment usually enriching such sacred objects; it was only a wooden cupboard placed against the wall, having sliding panels hidden by a mirror at the back so that communications to and from the Mahatmas could easily be dropped into it. "The more advanced initiates so stringently enjoined on their fellow-disciples the utmost reverence for the shrine that the majority of the native members durst not approach it within some feet, and the Europeans respected its sanctity by avoiding all sacrilegious handling of it."¹ With the aid of Monsieur and Madame Coulomb, chosen by the Priestess as confederates in knavery, many wonders were wrought, largely through the akasic force. A General Morgan testified to a miracle. On visiting the headquarters to see a painting of the Mahatma Koot Homi, which was kept in the shrine, he was after some delay taken to the "occult" room by

¹ A full description of the shrine is given in the Rev. J. W. Farquhar's *Modern Religious Movements in India*, p. 448. (1915.)

Madame Coulomb, the custodian. Too hurriedly opening the door of the shrine, she pretended that she had failed to see that a china saucer, to which she attached value, was near its edge, so down fell the saucer, dashed to pieces. M. Coulomb was despatched to get cement to mend it; the debris was collected, tied in a cloth, and deposited in the shrine, the door of which was locked. The General remarked to Mr. Damodar, the Joint Recording Secretary of the Society, that if the Mahatmas thought the saucer of importance they could make it whole. Soon after this, Mr. Damodar, who seemed to have been in the trance state, opened the door of the shrine, and drew a letter from the shelf, in which was this message:

“ To the small audience present, Madame Coulomb has occasion to assure herself that the devil is neither so black nor so wicked as he is generally represented: the mischief is easily repaired.—K. H.” (Koot Homi.)

On uncovering the cloth in which the fragments had been put, the saucer was found whole and with no trace of any breakage upon it!

The “ miracle ” is explained by the fact that there was at hand a saucer to match the broken one, Madame Coulomb having bought the pair at a store on the day when the “ accident ” occurred.

After this it is needless to expose other Theosophic tricks, but one other shall be mentioned. The boards of the wooden ceilings of the several rooms had interspaces through which letters from the loft above could be dropped. By this means Mr. Sinnett,

whose *Esoteric Buddhism* compasses the Theosophic creed, was the honoured recipient of an important communication from Koot Hoomi. All the letters were the handiwork of the Priestess, her writing being skilfully varied.

Three years after her death Mrs. Besant declared that since that event she has "received letters in the same handwriting as the letters which Madame Blavatsky received."¹ Following on this, the newspaper report adds "sensation" in parenthesis.

In 1884 a preliminary investigation into theosophical phenomena resulted in the Society for Psychical Research sending Dr. Hodgson, who had exposed Eusapia Palladino, to India to look fully into the matter. One result of his inquiries was to explain how the "miracle" of the saucer had been worked; and probably he would have discovered much more of interest about the shrine but for its destruction by Theosophists before his arrival on the spot. His report convicted Madame Blavatsky of "a long continued combination with other persons to produce by ordinary means a series of apparent marvels for the support of the Theosophic movement," and concluded thus: "For our own part we regard her neither as the mouthpiece of hidden seers nor as a mere vulgar adventuress: we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting impostors in history."

A year after this, at her invitation, Mr. Solovyoff visited Madame Blavatsky at Wurzburg, when she

¹ "*Isis very much Unveiled: the story of the Great Mahatma Hoax*," p. 24. By F. Edmund Garrett. *Westminster Gazette Library*, 1894.

poured scorn on her dupes. "What is one to do," she said, "when in order to rule men it is necessary to deceive them? . . . for almost invariably the more simple, the more silly, and the more gross the phenomenon, the more likely it is to succeed." Not a hint of this exposure of a woman who was called "the most monumental liar in all history" is to be found in Mrs. Besant's article already named. On the contrary, in a pamphlet published in 1907, championing the impostor, Mrs. Besant describes her as "passionately indignant when accused of sins she loathed; she was generous and forgiving to a repentant foe. She had a hundred splendid virtues and a few petty failings." The story of Madame Blavatsky's career is told in *A Modern Priestess of Isis* and in the sixth chapter of Mr. Podmore's *Studies in Psychological Research* and by Mr. Farquhar. She died in 1891, at the age of sixty. Unlike the eightfold distribution of the ashes of Gautama the Buddha, those of the foundress of Esoteric Buddhism were divided into three portions, to be distributed between Adyar, London and New York. Ultimately, the whole of the sacred remains were brought to India, where their ultimate disposal by Colonel Olcott (he died in 1907) is not clear. But, like John Brown, her "soul goes marching on"; thousands of believers in her as an inspired teacher are found in both hemispheres; the akasic force is unspent. The one redeeming feature in the movement is its promulgation of the doctrine of ethical evolution as fostering a larger charity towards all, regardless of "race, sect and class."

XI

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE—MRS. EDDY

A GLANCE at the list of Sunday services in London given in the Saturday papers shows how the movement known as Christian Science has caught-on in this country. The "revelation" on which it is based came to an American, Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy, in 1866, when she was forty-five. In that year, she says, "I discovered the Christ Science or divine Laws of Life, Truth and Love, and named my discovery Christian Science. God has been graciously preparing me during many years for the reception of this final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing."¹ As a girl she was attractive, high-spirited and sensitive; she heard "Voices" when she was eight; later on she had attacks of convulsive hysteria, fell into cataleptic trances; in short, was a confirmed neurotic. Her father said: "Mary Magdalene had seven devils, but our Mary has ten." She became obsessed by belief in animal magnetism, and when her last husband died (she was married three times) she said it was due to "malicious mesmerism," which she called "the opposite of divine science." Bad health, aggravated by "nerves," caused her to consult a Mr. Quimby, who was a homœopath, faith-healer and crank. To his influence on her may be

¹ *Science and Health*, p. 107.

traced Christian Science; in fact, he is its real "discoverer." His theory was that disease is "false reasoning," and this set her on the quest of her "discovery." A nerve-shattering accident befell her; Quimby came to the rescue, but her recovery was wrought by her reading the story of the man sick of the palsy, told in the ninth chapter of Matthew. "Son," said Jesus to him, "be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." The doubting crowd was silenced when at the command of Jesus the man took up his bed and walked. Such healing power was in these words that she felt herself made whole, rose from her bed and summoned her friends to behold the wonder. How it came about she told them she could not fully understand. "I could only assure the physician who attended me that the divine Spirit had wrought the miracle—a miracle which later I found to be in perfect Scientific accord with divine law."¹ She needed no doctor after that; she took to deep study of the Scriptures; she satisfied herself that all sins and diseases are subjective phenomena; thought out her subject and with the aid of a literary parson, the Rev. J. A. Wiggin, also helping herself bountifully, with his consent, to materials from Quimby's manuscripts, put her theory of Metaphysical Healing into shape and published it under the title of *Science and Health, with a Key to the Scriptures*. It is, in fact, the Bible of the sect. Gradually gathering a ring of disciples—many of them neurotic women—she founded her new religion. Her gospel, like that of the mediums, was not "without money and without price." At the start her fee

¹ *Retrospection and Introspection*, p. 38.

to the novitiates was one hundred dollars each, with a life annuity of ten per cent. on their future earnings. Later on, "moved by a strange providence," she said, "I was led to name three hundred dollars. . . . God has since shown me in multitudinous ways the wisdom of this decision."¹ She died very rich.

From an organisation called the Mother Church have sprung offshoots scattered "from China to Peru," or, more precisely, to Argentina. A Board of Education, of which Mrs. Eddy was the President, sits in Boston, to examine candidates and issue certificates to teachers of Christian Science. The sect has no official ministers, but the Readers at the Sunday services may indulge the hope that in time they may secure promotion as Metaphysical Healers or Mind Curists, or Viticulturists, or Magnetic Healers, or Phrenopathists, or Medical Clairvoyants, or Esoteric Vibrationists, or Psychic Scientists, or Mesmerists, or Occultists. The Sunday services commend themselves to quiet-seekers. The interval for silent prayer, the homely congregational singing and the passages from the Bible, even from the fatuous pages of *Science and Health* read alternately by the Readers—a man and a woman—are all nerve-soothers. But the doctrines, so far as they can be gleaned from a mixture of metaphysical terms and commentaries on numerous passages from the Bible—a mass of "confused feeding"—appear to centre round the problems of the nature of Matter and of Sin. Matter is but the subjective state of

¹ See *ante*, p. 183, and *Faith and Works of Christian Science*, p. 71. By Stephen Paget.

what is here called mortal mind. Mind is the principle of the Universe. All disease is the result of education and can carry its ill effects no further than mortal mind maps out the way. We weep because others weep; we yawn because they yawn, and we have small-pox because others have it; but mortal mind, not matter, contains and carries the infection. "You say a boil is painful, but that is impossible, for matter without mind is not painful. The boil simply manifests your belief in pain. To prevent disease or cure it mentally let spirit destroy the dream of sense. A little girl, who had occasionally listened to my explanation, wounded her finger badly. She seemed not to notice it. On being questioned about it she answered ingeniously: 'There is no sensation in matter.'" A budding psychophysicologist!

"Life, God, omnipotent Good, deny death, evil, sin, disease. Sin is error: it is no part of man's true nature; only Truth alone can destroy."¹

Messrs. Lodge and Barrett and less prominent believers in telepathy may learn a lesson from the Christian Scientists in their utilisation of that assumed phenomenon. Thereby the afflicted who are absent, no matter at what distance from the appointed healers, can be cured. The longitude of the various soul-communion time-tables is made known to the

¹ *Science and Health*, p. 113.

I am tempted to repeat the story of a lady Christian Scientist who, calling on a sick neighbour, was told by the servant that her mistress was too ill to be seen. "Tell her," said the lady, "that her illness is not of the body; she thinks she's ill, and when she leaves off thinking she'll be well. I'm going away for a few days and will call again as soon as I am back." She did this, and on asking the servant how her mistress was, the girl said: "Well, ma'am, she thinks she's dead!"

scattered invalids (fees prepaid); then they meet at the given hour to receive the telepathic energies which radiate from the healing Word. The command is: "Join the Success Circle. . . . The Centre of that Circle is my omnipotent WORD. Its vibrations radiate more and more powerfully day by day. As the sun sends out vibrations, so my WORD radiates Success to 10,000 lives as easily as to one."

Based on religion of a sort, and appearing to throw a new light on old problems, denying the reality of matter, of disease, suffering and sin, denouncing drugs and doctors, and impudently asserting that "obedience to the so-called physical laws of health has not checked sickness," and proclaiming this in the name of Christian Science, there can be little wonder that many have found in it a balm more soothing even than that which the old lady derived from the blessed word "Mesopotamia." You get a cold in the head and you cure it "through the realisation of the omnipresence of Love." Such is the magic power of *Science and Health* that a Christian Science publication tells a story of a little girl who read passages from that book to a lame sparrow till it flew away!

It cannot be denied that the testimonies of healing which form a part of the week-night services at the various churches are genuine experiences. The neurotic, the hypochondriac, the depressed, the sufferer from *le malade imaginaire*—each bear witness to the cures wrought upon them, as they honestly believe, by the mind-medicine of Christian Science. But these maladies are functional, and the remedy

is only another name for rest cure, strengthened by exercise of what in theology is called faith, but which is only another name for cultivation of quietude. Every wise doctor makes use of the power of suggestion. And it is recognised that, even in cases of threatened organic trouble, brain-mental influence has been effective in arresting it. But no developed organic diseases, no accidents needing surgical treatment, have been, nor can be, dealt with successfully by prayer and faith. A broken leg is not mended by the fatuous assurance given in *Science and Health* that "bones have only the substance of thought which formed them," and therefore "no breakage or dislocation can really occur," and there have been many sad cases where lives have been sacrificed through the sick person's obstinate faith in the efficacy of the mind cure.

PART IV
SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALISM

XII

SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALISM

"Obscurum per obscurius," Whatever we know nothing about, let us make the explanation of everything else.

VAIN is the effort to persuade ourselves that no bias or prepossession determines our view of things concerning which two opinions are possible. Impartial attitude is a delusion, especially when we deal with the marvellous; "nothing," as Montaigne says, "is so firmly believed as that which is least known." Every generation, in its own way, seeketh a sign, and the spiritualists believe that a sign has been given; that the door is opened; the veil lifted; the silence of the ages broken by voices from the Beyond.

With the dawn of self-consciousness—the knowing that he knows—man reached the plane where conceptions of himself as something apart from his surroundings were possible; and, with this, hazy wonderment on his destiny. The lust of life, the impulse of the "glory of going on and still to be," possessed and has never left him: while the belief that death is not the end of man had powerful impetus from the dreams of the night and the shadows of things cast by the day. On such and like unsubstantial phenomena the fabric of belief in immortality has been raised: a fabric built on the emotions

and, seemingly, as unstable as its foundations. Out of the incomprehensible has risen the illusive: specious feelings have begotten the belief that what is desired must needs have fulfilment; that "being weary proves that man has where to rest." Even the poet from whom this line is quoted, in apostrophising his dead father, must needs speculate:

"O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force
Surely has not been left vain!
Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm!"¹

It is especially at séances that the emotions, compact as they are of fear, hope and wonder, and when undisciplined, parents of countless evils, have unchecked play. The attitude of the sitters is receptive, uncritical; exaltation of feeling strengthens the wish to believe; the power of suggestion, whose continuous influence in social evolution from a remote past cannot be over-estimated, is dominant, and the senses are prepared to see and hear what they are told. As needful to-day as when he gave it more than sixty years ago is Faraday's warning against the "tendency to deceive ourselves regarding all we wish for, and the necessity of resistance to those desires."² As with his fellow-conjurer, sense-deception is the medium's chief tool, the attention and concentration of the befooled onlookers are diverted by his patter, while dim light or total darkness as essentials of his trade effect the rest. Added

¹ *Rugby Chapel*. By Matthew Arnold.

² *Science and Education*, p. 50.

to these there is the fatigue which in time overcomes the power of the sense-organs to report truly. Surely one can trust one's senses: we say, seeing is believing; whereas the story of man's advance is the story of his escape from the illusions of the senses, especially when they stimulate a dominant idea or obsession. If we believed what we saw, we should hold to the error that the earth is flat and that the sun revolves round it. We still talk of sunrises and sunsets.

And there is no safety, only peril, in numbers; the medium can more easily hypnotise or hallucinate a circle. In their inquiry into Mesmer's methods the Committee laid stress on the fact that performances in which excitement and contagion have full play are more successful than private ones. There is active what M. Gustave le Bon calls "the psychological law of the mental unity of crowds," as manifest, for example, in the recurring epidemic mental disorders of history, from, to name no earlier one, the chorœamania or the dancing hysterics of the fourteenth century to the religious revivals of our own time.

Concerning the amazingly clever Davey, who so deceived the very elect as to obtain from them certificates as to the supernormal character of his tricks, "the feature is not," says a writer quoted by M. le Bon, "the marvellousness of the tricks themselves, but the extreme weakness of the reports made with respect to them by the non-initiated witnesses. It is clear that witnesses even in number may give circumstantial relations which are completely erroneous, but whose result is that, if their descriptions are

accepted as exact, the phenomena which they describe are inexplicable by trickery.”¹

So long as man lives on this planet he will be hoaxed and hocused. The clever shoemaker who, posing in uniform as Captain of Köpenick, walked into the Rathaus, told the burgomaster that he was dismissed and frightened him into surrendering the municipal cash-box, made the world laugh at the befooled German; but the laugh was turned against us when the story of the arrival of 150,000 Russian soldiers in France via England had general credence; in fact, there are people who still believe it. Nor is expert knowledge, as foregoing examples of befooled men of science have shown, any security against deception. Shrewd Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury—himself a timid man—says in his *Leviathan*, “the most part of men, though they have the use of Reasoning a little way, as in numbering to some degree, yet it serves them to little use in common life in which they govern themselves, some better, some worse, according to their differences of experience, quickness of memory and inclinations to severall ends.”² Parallel with this is Herbert Spencer’s remark that “men are rational beings in but a very limited sense, that conduct results from desire,”³ and a similar comment by Dr. Henry Maudsley that “it is a plausible but quite false presumption that mankind in general act on rational principles.”⁴ The tendency in each one of us is to

¹ “*Annales de Science Psychique*.” *The Crowd*, p. 49. By G. le Bon.

² *Leviathan*, Part I., chapter v., p. 31. (Oxford, 1881. Reprint of the first edition.)

³ *Autobiography*. Vol. ii., p. 366.

⁴ *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, p. 65.

travel along the line of least resistance; the apparent solution of a problem, especially when the problem deals with matters of gravity, is welcomed, as relief from the labour of thinking and from the pain of new ideas. As Giordano Bruno said: "Ignorance is the finest science in the world, because it is acquired without labour and pains and keeps the mind free from melancholy."¹

Hence, to quote the late Professor William James: "Our faith is faith in some one else's faith, and in the greatest matters this is most the case." Apposite to this are the lines which Henry Sidgwick composed in his sleep, or at least awoke thinking of:

"We think so, because other people all think so,
Or because—or because, after all, we do think so;
Or because we were told so, and think we must think so.
Or because we once thought so and think we still think so;
Or because, having thought so, we think we *will* think so."²

A stock argument of the easy-going believers in Spiritualism is: How can we deny the genuineness of the phenomena, from raps to messages through "controls," when some eminent and learned men declare their belief in them? Writing to my wife, the distinguished author, Eden Phillpotts, remarks: "At Birmingham the attitude towards Sir Oliver Lodge is rather amazing. He seems to be regarded as an intellectual giant at the University, which I visited. A railway foreman with whom I had a talk argued thus about Sir Oliver. He admitted that his ideas and opinions were remarkable, but, he said, 'he's a great man and wise and learned,

¹ *Giordano Bruno*. By W. Boulton.

² *Henry Sidgwick: a Memoir*, p. 124.

so who are we uneducated, common men that we should think we know better than him?'” The foreman spoke for the multitude who do not and cannot discriminate: they assume that the man who can speak with unchallenged authority on the subject of which he is master is entitled to speak with the same authority of anything and everything else. “When,” says Hobbes, “a man cannot assure himself of the true causes of things, he supposes causes of them, or trusteth to the Authority of other men, such as he thinks to be his friends and wiser than himself.”¹ An expert in physics may be ignorant of biology and psychology; he may never have read a book on anthropology and hence remained ignorant of the invaluable material bearing on the history of Spiritualism in such classics as *Primitive Culture* and *The Golden Bough*, wherein are supplied anti-septics to Spiritualism. The physicist and the mathematician are not competent witnesses to the truth or falsity of what lies outside their province. They deal with what is exact, definite, and in unvarying relation, which begets in them a serious limitation. On the contrary, the biologist and psychologist, whose concern is with living things, are confronted with variations and exceptions which cannot be confined within any formula. Something to check any cocksureness is always manifesting itself in the phenomena which they investigate.

Herein may be found a key to the fact that, with the exception of the late Dr. A. R. Wallace, who, as a young man, believed that “electro-biology” was a supernormal phenomenon, it is mostly from

¹ *Leviathan*, Part I., chapter xii., p. 79.

physicists that Spiritualism derives support. What little trust in the value of their testimony is warranted is seen in the deceptions to which they have fallen willing victims. To cull only three examples, take Sir William Crookes, with his reiteration of belief in Florence Cook as a medium of the materialisation of spirits, after her detection in fraud: Sir Oliver Lodge, in his belief, after witnessing them, in the genuineness of the performances of Eusapia Palladino, and the admission afterwards that he had been befooled: and Sir W. F. Barrett asserting his conviction that the dowser discovers the presence of water by "the faculty of clairvoyance" and possession of a "supersensuous perceptive power."¹ And this last-named deliverance in the teeth of an adverse Report of a Committee of Engineers and Surveyors appointed to examine into this alleged power²: "Whatever sensitiveness to underground water may exist in certain persons, of which some evidence has been given, it is not sufficiently definite and trustworthy to be of much practical value. The diviners, as a rule, confine their attention to small streams of water, and as there are few places where these cannot be found, they may well show a large percentage of success." This confirms the conclusion given in a paper by Mr. T. V. Holmes in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, November, 1897, written in answer to a paper on "Water Divining,"

¹ *Psychical Research*, p. 183. "I believe all true clairvoyance to be spirit impression and that all true dowsing is the same."—A. R. Wallace to Professor Barrett: *Letters and Reminiscences of A. R. Wallace*. Vol. ii., p. 208.

² *The Sanitary Record and Municipal Engineering*, 2nd May, 1913, p. 466.

contributed by Sir W. F. Barrett to the XXXIInd Part of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. Mr. Holmes says: "As to the nature of the personal peculiarities of those in whose hands the rod turns violently, I will only add that they probably resemble in nervous organisation those who become intensely excited at religious meetings. The amateur diviner appears to be influenced solely by his inner sensations: the professional by his inner sensations together with his practical knowledge of water-bearing surface-beds. Both unite in the erroneous belief that underground water exists (in water-bearing beds) concentrated at certain spots and absent a few feet away. Consequently, the facts as to the distribution of underground water seem to be fatal to the notions that the diviner's sensations, whatever their origin, are caused by the peculiar nearness of water at the points where they are specially felt, or that he possesses any peculiar abnormal faculty for its discovery."¹

The reader will judge for himself in what degree the authority of these eminent physicists, in their assertions of belief in graver matters where mechanical tests fail us, is impaired by these examples.

On one of the rare occasions when that champion trickster and acutest of women, Madame Blavatsky, spoke the truth, she said: "I have not met with more than two or three men who knew how to observe and see and remark on what was going on around them. It is simply amazing! At least nine out of every ten people are entirely devoid of the

¹ P. 254.

capacity of observation and of the power of remembering accurately what took place even a few hours before. How often it has happened that, under my direction and revision, minutes of various occurrences and phenomena have been drawn up; lo, the most innocent and conscientious people, even sceptics, even those who actually suspected me, have signed *en toutes lettres* as witnesses at the foot of the minutes! And all the time I knew that what had happened was not in the least what was stated in the minutes.”¹

Adverse comment continues to be made on the aloofness of attitude of the larger number of scientists toward Spiritualism. In *Modern Spiritualism* the late Frank Podmore criticised with some asperity their refusal to take the thing seriously.²

Science knows no finality. As M. Duclaux finely said: “Because science is sure of nothing, it is always advancing.” If telepathy can be proved; if the “hitherto unknown force” which Sir William Crookes assumed as the only explanation of Home’s levitation and fire ordeals can be demonstrated to exist; science will welcome it as a further unveiling of the arcana of nature. Up to the present no such verification has come, and investigation, thus far, warrants no invocation of the supernormal to explain so-called “spiritual” phenomena. It is, as Hobbes wrote two hundred and sixty years ago: “Ignorance of naturall causes disposeth a man to Credulity, so as to believe many times impossibilities: For such

¹ *A Modern Priestess of Isis*, p. 156. By V. S. Solovyoff. Translated by Valter Leaf. (1895.)

² *Modern Spiritualism*. Vol. ii., p. 145.

know nothing to the contrary, but that they may be true, being unable to detect the impossibility. And Credulity, because men loved to be hearkened unto in company, disposeth them to lying, so that Ignorance itself, without Malice, is able to make a man both to believe lyes and tell them: and sometimes also to invent them.”¹

But what are the facts? The table-turning mania spread to this country in 1853, and the hold which it had on the public mind, especially when attributed to spiritual agency, caused both professional and scientific men to investigate the phenomenon. Amongst the latter Faraday took the leading part in an inquiry, the outcome of which was the conviction that the movements were due to unconscious muscular action of the hands upon the table. To prove this, he devised a very simple apparatus in the shape of two sheets of mill-board, between which he placed two glass rollers and fastened the whole with two elastic bands, an index-pointer being fixed to the apparatus to indicate whether the upper board moved on the lower one—*i.e.* whether there was pressure towards one side or the other. The upper board was freely movable upon the rods when the tips of the fingers of one or both hands were placed lightly on it. “Such a ‘planchette’ (as it was subsequently termed) was placed on the table beneath the fingers of each operator in a ‘table-turning’ experiment, and it was found that whereas in previous experiments without a planchette the table had been made to move by the hands lightly resting on it, now there was no movement of the table but

¹ *Leviathan*, Part I., chap. ii., p. 77.

a slight forward displacement, more or less conspicuous, of the upper board of the planchette as it moved on its glass rollers under the gentle pressure of the operators' fingers. In this way Faraday showed that it was possible for honest experimenters to apply unconsciously a slight push to the table, and so for their united unconscious efforts to cause it to move or turn in a manner which was to them mysterious and supernatural, whereas when their fingers were separated from the table by the mobile planchette, the 'push' in each case merely caused the upper board of that little intermediary to move instead of acting upon the table itself."¹ Complete proof of unconscious muscular action was supplied by the fact that when the sitters understood the purpose of the apparatus and kept their attention on it, no movement followed; when they looked away from it, it wobbled, though they believed that they kept it in position.

In his lecture on "Mental Education," Faraday says: "A universal objection was made to it by the table turners. It was said to paralyse the powers of the mind—but the experimenters need not see the index, they may leave their friends to watch that and their minds may revel in any power that their expectation or their imagination can confer. So restrained, a *dislike* to the trial arises, but what is that except a proof that whilst they trust themselves they doubt themselves, and are not willing to proceed to the decision, lest the trust which they like should fail them, and the doubt which they dislike rise to the authority of truth."²

¹ *Science and Education*, p. 69.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51.

Sir Ray Lankester adds that "By the irony of human fate, Faraday's detective 'planchette' was subsequently fitted with a pencil and used by 'occultists' to obtain writing caused by the unconscious, though sometimes conscious, direction of its movements by the hands of an inquirer lightly laid on it. Such writing was interpreted by the 'occultists' as 'messages from the spirit world.' On the other hand, 'planchette-writing' and similar experimental methods offer to the psychologist a valuable means of exploring the directive movements given unconsciously to the muscles of the body by the brain in many persons when thus subjected to properly guarded and well-devised experiment."¹ The "planchette" is still taken seriously by spiritualists. Mr. J. A. Hill, while admitting that no success attended his experiments with it, discusses its possibilities as to supernormal results.²

After the action brought by the widow Lyon against Home, in 1868, it transpired that Faraday had accepted an invitation from the defendant to a séance, but that Faraday had imposed conditions of investigation which Home would not accept. Little wonder therefore that, choosing his own terms, he was never detected by his dupes.

In 1864 Tyndall was present at a séance at the house of Mr. Newton Crosland, a prominent spiritualist. He tells the result in his *Fragments of Science*: "Nothing occurred which could not have been effected by fraud or accident."³ In January,

¹ *Psychical Investigations*, p. 221.

² *Science and Education*, p. 69.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 314-322.

1874, Darwin went to a séance at the house of his brother Erasmus, Mr. (afterwards Sir Francis) Galton, G. H. Lewes and "George Eliot" being also present. The notorious Williams was the medium. After describing the "fun in the dark, chairs, flutes, bells and candlesticks flying about," Darwin concludes: "The Lord have mercy on us all, if we have to believe such rubbish"¹ (see *ante*, p. 123). Huxley attended "a carefully arranged séance" at the same house. A full report of this is given in the *Life and Letters*²: "My conclusion is that Mr. X is a cheat and an impostor." Huxley had already been present at several séances at the house of his brother George as early as 1852, given by Mrs. Hayden, the first medium imported from America; also at the houses of various friends, meeting mediums "by whom he was most unfavourably impressed." Hence his justification, after such sifting of the matter, for declining to join a committee of investigation promoted by the London Dialectical Society in 1869. "If anybody would endow me with the faculty of listening to the chatter of old women and curates in the nearest cathedral town, I should decline the business, having better things to do. And if the folk in the spiritual world do not talk more wisely and sensibly than their friends report them to do, I put them in the same category. The only good that I can see in the demonstration of the truth of Spiritualism is to furnish an additional argument against suicide. Better live a crossing-sweeper than die and be made to talk

¹ *Life and Letters*. Vol. iii., p. 187.

² Vol. i., pp. 419, 420.

twaddle by a medium hired at a guinea a séance.”¹ At a sitting with Mr. Vout Peters, held on 3rd March, 1916, Mr. J. A. Hill says there came this message, apparently from Raymond Lodge, through “Moonstone”: “I have come into touch with Huxley.” Then Moonstone says: “Who’s the old man got funny whiskers? Square forehead, hair caught away here (indicating temples), nose full, clean-shaven lips, upper lip hangs over, scientific, cold. Not a man you would tell your heart troubles to. Very clever. Cold, scientific aspect.” (It is fairly certain that this is meant for Huxley; the description is good, though the coldness—a popular view—is probably exaggerated.) The words in parentheses are Mr. Hill’s comment. Huxley seems to have escaped talking the “twaddle” which he dreaded. But we ask with Geronte in Molière’s *Fourberies de Scapin*, “Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?”

In Mrs. Piper’s trances “some few of the persons mentioned were obviously dream-creations. For example, an Adam Bede as well as a George Eliot”² are alluded to as real individuals on the other side! The controls through whom Mr. Hill receives communications appear to be a spiritual democracy: at least they reach a low plane in one who says: “Now,

¹ Speaking of a certain member of the Psychical Research Society, he said: “He is one of the people who talk of the ‘possibility’ of the thing, who think the difficulty of disproving a thing as good as direct evidence in its favour.”—*Life and Letters*. Vol. ii., p. 425.

“As finite added to finite never approaches a hair’s-breadth nearer to infinite; so a fact incredible in itself acquires not the smallest accession of probability by the accumulation of testimony.”—Burton’s *Life and Letters of David Hume*. Vol. i., p. 480.

² *Psychical Investigations*, p. 208. By J. A. Hill.

I'm only an uneducated man—I'm owd Billy—and I can only talk Lancashire dialect, an' tha mayn't understand it." (In the flesh he was Billy Matthews.) Billy adds that he has seen Richard Hodgson, who says to him, "I've brought my old friend, Henry Sidgwick, with me."¹

Lord Kelvin, whose attitude towards belief in the supernatural was sympathetic, said that fraud or bad observation explained belief in Spiritualism. Professor Clifford, after examination into the genuineness of the phenomena, put his conclusion with brevity: "The universe is made up of matter and motion, and there's no room for ghosts." More weighty, because of his position as the first President of the American Branch of the Society for Psychical Research, is the deliverance of the late distinguished astronomer, Simon Newcomb. "Nothing," he said, "has been brought out by the research of that Society and its able collaborators except what we should expect to find in the ordinary course of nature."² Mr. Podmore says that in the fifteen years which have elapsed since, in 1882, Professor Henry Sidgwick, in his Address to the Society for Psychical Research, felt warranted in assuming that a mass of evidence to justify impartial examination would be forthcoming, the hope has not been realised. "While few opportunities have been afforded to the Society's representatives for continuous investigation of any sort, no positive results have been obtained worthy of record. All spiritualist manifestations appear indeed to have become less frequent, not only

¹ *Psychical Investigations*, p. 145.

² *Nineteenth Century*, January, 1909, p. 139.

in private circles, but with professional mediums. The Spiritualist papers no longer teem with records of marvellous séances. There has been little to encourage the Society to investigate the performances of professional mediums.”¹ Its main service has been, as Mr. Haynes says, “to extend the region of experimental psychology,”² and to make evident that the mind is of far more complex nature than had been suspected.

Save in raps and in table-tiltings and leapings, the decline in the presentment of the physical group of phenomena is continuous, and there is even a slump in materialisation and spirit photographs. Evidence, if it deserves the name, centres more upon communications from the departed through a control. The change is one for which spiritualists are coy at giving an explanation.

No eminent man of science since Huxley has dwelt more insistently on the limitation of human faculties and on the insoluble eternal problem of the Why, the Whence, and the Whither than Sir Ray Lankester. In an essay on “Science and the Unknown,” he demands that all the reputed marvels of Spiritualism shall be brought before the bar of science for examination and testing.

“Lovers of science have never been unwilling to investigate such marvels if fairly and squarely brought before them. In the very few cases which have been submitted in this way to scientific examination, the marvel has been shown to be either

¹ *Studies in Psychical Research*, p. 83.

² *The Belief in Personal Immortality*, p. 108. An admirable treatise, compendious and adequate.

childish fraud or a mere conjurer's trick, or else the facts adduced in evidence have proved to be entirely insufficient to support the conclusion that there is anything unusual at work or beyond the experience of scientific investigators. It is unfortunately true that most persons are quite unprepared to admit the deficiencies of their own powers of observation and memory, and are also unaware of their own ignorance of perfectly natural occurrences which continually lead to self-deception and illusion. Moreover, the capacity for logical inference and argument is not common. The whole past and present history of what is called 'the occult' is enveloped in an atmosphere of self-deception and of readiness to be deceived by others to which misplaced confidence in their own cleverness and power of detecting trickery renders many—one may almost say most—people victims."¹

Sir H. B. Donkin has had considerable experience of many mediums, and speaks with the authority of a mental pathologist of the first rank when, as already cited, he contends that the demonstrative value claimed for the conclusions in *Raymond* as proved "rests upon nothing but assertion."

This is cogently emphasized by the eminent neuropathologist, Dr. Charles Mercier, in an article on "Sir Oliver Lodge and the Scientific World" in the *Hibbert Journal* of July, 1917. He says that "it is not for the scientific world, or for any one else, to disprove Sir Oliver Lodge's assertions, his doctrines, his interpretations, or his facts. The *onus is on him to prove them*. He is to bring forward

¹ *Diversions of a Naturalist*, p. 364.

evidence of fact, not of interpretation of fact; and if he asks us to accept his interpretations, *they must be of such a nature that no other interpretation can be placed upon the fact.* As long as his facts are susceptible of interpretation by the operation of natural laws, he has no right to ask us to follow him in supposing that they are supernatural. As long as he offers us interpretation of fact in the place of fact, he is not entitled even to a hearing. As long as his facts are observed only by himself or by those who have already avowed their desire to interpret them in a certain way, he has no right to ask us to accept them as indisputable.”¹

This irrefragable argument was anticipated by Faraday. He says “that the asserter of any new thing has no right to claim an answer in the form of *Yes* or *No*, or think, because none is forthcoming, that he is to be considered as having established his assertion. So much is unknown to the wisest man that he may often be without an answer; as frequently he is so, because the subject is in the region of hypothesis, and not of facts. In either case he has the right to refuse to speak. I cannot tell whether there are two fluids of electricity or any fluid at all. I am not bound to explain how a table tilts any more than to indicate how, under the conjurer’s hands, a pudding appears in a hat. The means are not known to me. I am persuaded that the results, however strange they may appear, are in accordance with that which is truly known, and, if carefully investigated, would justify the well-tried laws of nature. . . . Let those who affirm the

¹ P. 618. And see Dr. Mercier’s *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*, pp. 59, 131.

exception to the general laws of nature, or those others who, upon the affirmation accept the result, work out the experimental proof.”¹

If justification of the attitude of men who have “no axe of their own to grind” were necessary, this can be found in the following testimony of the well-known “Thought-reader,” Mr. Stuart Cumberland. It is quoted from an article which he contributed to *The Daily Mail* of the 5th January, 1917. After recounting his experiences at home he says: “I shortly afterwards went to the West, followed by a visit to the East, in pursuit of my investigations, hoping upon hope that I should eventually find some genuine instance of occult manifestation. I heard much about the alleged miraculous from people whose honesty of purpose was beyond question and whose veracity was above suspicion, and I saw much to which an occult origin was attached, but the assumed occultism of which proved, on the one hand, to be the outcome of highly strung expectation or false sensorial impressions or, on the other, to be the result of skilfully applied chicanery.

“In a word, I have never yet in any land or with any medium or adept discovered any alleged occult manifestation that was not explicable upon a perfectly natural basis and which in the majority of instances could not be humanly duplicated under precisely similar conditions. This, as the true believer would say, has been my misfortune. But there it is. So inherent is this hankering after the supernatural in human nature that many would

¹ *Science and Education*, pp. 61, 62.

much rather seek for a supernatural than a natural explanation of what may seem mysterious or out of the way to them.

"It is just this longing in human nature upon which these professional psychic frauds are preying to-day.

"To-day, with its heavy death toll and fateful uncertainty so closely affecting every section of the community, is indeed the moment for the practitioners on the shady side of spiritism. There is a natural desire among the bereaved, or those in doubt as to the actual facts surrounding the 'missing,' to seek for news and guidance unobtainable through the ordinary channels. These credulous folk are told that this or that medium is a real wonder, who has given such and such a person the most astounding revelations. So what has been vouchsafed others can quite as well be revealed to them. Hence the run upon the plausible 'crooks,' who so readily trade upon their credulity.

"The foolish, credulous dupes never for a moment consider the utter incongruousness of the association of their beloved dead or missing with these professional 'spookists.' It never enters their heads that if the spirit of any one dear to them could return at all, it would be to them direct that his return would be manifested, and that to have to go to some strange 'crook' and part with money for the privilege of being put in touch with the spirit is the height of absurdity. They are told that they themselves are not *mediumistic*, and that it is only through the truly *mediumistic* that such communications are possible. Besides, it is the fashion of 'the thing' to go to

these mediums, who, 'poor dears,' must live and who are entitled to payment for the exhaustion they frequently undergo in getting in touch with the spirits. No labourer, in fact, is so worthy of his hire as one in the spiritual vineyard.

"And the wine he presses, as he rakes in the notes, is the flow of tears from the sorrowful and distressed.

"It is not only a shady business, but it is a mean and cruel one and should be put an end to. If the foolish cannot or will not protect themselves, they must be protected against their own folly."

"Again and again," writes Dr. Furness, "mediums have led round the circles the materialised spirits of their wives and introduced them to each visitor in turn. Fathers have taken round their daughters, and I have seen widows sob in the arms of their dead husbands. Testimony such as this staggers me. Have I been smitten with colour-blindness? Before me, as far as I can detect, stands the very medium herself, in shape, size, form and feature true to a line, and yet, one after another, honest men and women at my side, within ten minutes of each other, assert that she is the absolute counterpart of their nearest and dearest friend; nay, that she *is* that friend."¹

Sir Oliver Lodge cautions the bereaved against devoting so large a portion of time and attention as he has given in getting and recording communications from the spirit world. He bids them accept his assurance—he settles once and for all by an *ipse dixit* the momentous question—that those who have departed this life "are still active and useful and

¹ *Fact and Fable in Psychology*, p. 163. By Joseph Jastrow.

interested and happy—more alive than ever in one sense—and to make up their minds to live a useful life till they rejoin them.”¹

Bowed down with grief and clutching, like drowning men, at straws, these mourners, while respecting Sir Oliver's precept, will hasten, if their purses permit, to follow his example. They will desire to be themselves assured that those who have departed this life can confirm what he says. Hence no caution that he can give can lessen his unenvied responsibility in causing a rush of sorrowing parents and relatives to mediums, preferably to the woman through whom he sought news from his dead son. Mrs. Leonard and the rest of them will bless his name for the harvest of fees thereby reaped; bookings “in advance” are reported by the newspapers as active.

The quotation cited above is, in its elusiveness, typical of aught else that Sir Oliver Lodge says about another life. “We change our state at birth and come into the world of air and sense and myriad existence; we change our state at death and enter a region of what? Of ether, I think, and still more myriad existence; a region in which communion is more akin to what we here call telepathy, and where intercourse is not conducted by the accustomed indirect physical processes, but a region in which beauty and knowledge are as vivid as they are here; a region in which progress is possible and in which ‘admiration, hope and love’ are even more real than dominant.”² Such mellifluous and soothing words, penned, we know, by a kindly soul, should fall like

¹ *Raymond*, p. 342.

² P. 298.

music on the ears of the incarnate devils of the Kaiser type. For admission to that region will be theirs, so Raymond tells us, without qualification, after they have done penance in a reformatory, a sort of celestial Borstal, and have there shed their "nasty ideas and vices."¹ This "new revelation" falls into line with the belief of the late Dean Farrar. "He did not deny the existence of hell; he only thought that fewer people will go there, and perhaps find it much less disagreeable than is generally supposed."² Even the devil may have a chance:

"Auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak' a thought an' men'
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake."

All manner of questions are suggested by the foregoing. No hint of the location, or of the latitude and longitude of the ethereal region, has been given in any purported communications therefrom. When Sir Oliver speculates about the Universe he contradicts himself on the same page. "I have learned," he says, "to regard it as a concrete and full-bodied reality with parts accessible and intelligible to us, all of it capable of being understood and investigated by the human mind. . . . We must admit that the whole truth about the simplest thing is assuredly beyond us; the Thing in itself is related to the whole universe and in its fulness is incomprehensible."³

Although, in wise restraint, he makes "no assertion concerning the possible psychical use of the

¹ P. 230.

² *An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 98. By Sir Leslie Stephen.

³ *Raymond*, p. 380.

Ether of Space," he assumes that each spirit is composed of a detached portion of it, otherwise "Eternal form" would not "divide the eternal soul from all beside." In his chapter on the "Resurrection of the Body," in *Raymond*, we gather that materiality clings to it.¹ Mutilated limbs are replaced—there is Raymond's communication that he "knew a man that had lost his arm but has got another one"²—while bodily marks, "scars and wounds are reassumed for purposes of identification and when re-entering the physical atmosphere for the purpose of communication with friends."³ (This tempts to ribald quotation from the old farce of Box and Cox: "Have you a strawberry mark on your left arm? Then you are my long-lost brother.") "Details connected with clothes and little unessential tricks of manner may—in some unknown sense—be assumed too."⁴ "The clothes," says another writer, "are not, of course, material clothes; they are mere accessories assumed, so to speak, to facilitate the question of identity."⁵

This assumption of unbroken relations between soul and body is one of several points on which Spiritualism is in conflict with orthodox teaching, although that is vague enough as to the state and location of the soul between death and resurrection. With an ingenuity which has never failed it, the Roman Catholic Church solves the difficulty by putting the soul in purgatory. In what mental muddle a Protestant Doctor of Divinity plunges

¹ "Something of matter, very much refined, will remain."—Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. Vol. ii., p. 163. (Birkbeck Hill's Edition.)

² *Raymond*, p. 195.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁴ P. 324.

⁵ *Ghostly Phenomena*, p. 154. By Elliot O'Donnell.

himself has example in an answer to the problem given by the Rev. Professor David Smith to a correspondent in *The British Weekly* of the 18th January, 1917. "We shall not," he assures his querist, "lack embodiment in the Hereafter. There awaits us a nobler vesture, 'a habitation built by God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' This is the resurrection-body, 'a spiritual body (cf. 1 Cor. xv. 44) fashioned like unto our Lord's glorious body' (Phil. iii. 21). The comfort, however, is only partial, or, rather, it is ultimate and not immediate. For it is at the Second Advent that the dead will be raised incorruptible (1 Thess. iv. 16), and meanwhile their souls must remain naked, divested of their earthly tent-dwelling, and yet unclothed with their 'habitation from heaven.' . . . Here then lies the comfort of the Christian revelation of the resurrection of the body. It is our assurance that heaven will be no cheerless world of unsubstantial ghosts, but a kindly and homely scene where we shall meet in the fulness of an ennobled humanity and resume the old affections with a deeper and warmer intimacy."

Contrast with this tawdry patchwork of texts and comment the pagan Emperor Hadrian's address to his soul at the approach of death:

"Animula, vagula, blandula,
Hospes, comesque corporis!
Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
Pallidula, frigida, nudula,
Nec, ut soles, dabis joca!"¹

¹ "Soul of mine, thou fleeting, clinging thing,
Long my body's mate and guest,
Ah! now whither wilt thou wing,
Pallid, naked, shivering,
Never, never more to speak and jest."

But an adequate translation is not possible.

Dwelling for a moment on the overwhelming feeling aroused in the presence of the revelations of astronomy, especially in their correction of the geocentric theory in which the sun was conceived of as an appanage to the earth, and the stars as a subordinate detail—"He made the stars also"¹—we find in spiritistic teaching a survival of the anthropocentric theory. This, as is well known, had an ardent exponent in the late Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace and, implicitly, has support from Sir Oliver Lodge, who sees in each of the temporary occupants of this speck, one of others as the sand of the seashore innumerable, "an infinite worth and vital importance." It may be so; we know not, in this, as in all the problems that confront us, "we may handle the veil as much as we please; but we cannot raise it."²

It involves no small stretch of the imagination to envisage a procession of millions upon millions of individuals of such "infinite worth and vital importance," from the semi-brutal, proto-human ancestors to the noblest specimen of *Homo sapiens*, pouring in continuous stream from an ageless past to an eternal future under conditions where, in Sir Oliver's words, "they are more alive than ever," each one of these myriads—for there can be no exceptions—remaining in touch with earth. Each one: the myriad babes who opened their eyes here only to close them in death; the aged gathered as "shocks of corn, fully ripe"; the idiots; the lunatics; the crippled; the untold hecatombs of the slain, the starved, the tortured; the eaters and the

¹ Genesis i. 16.

² *Freethinking and Plain Speaking*, p. 157. By Sir Leslie Stephen.

eaten—victims of ruthlessness and rapine; awakening the reflection whether human existence has not been more a curse than a blessing in this tear-stained, blood-soaked world. Mingled with that motley crowd, “in that equal sky,” so Raymond tells us, for himself and others, are their “faithful dogs to bear them company.” This is confirmed by no less an authority than “Owd Billy,” who communicates through a medium, Tom Tyrrell, that “the lower brute creation passes into spirit life, same as us.”¹

The reflection may occur to some, after reading the communications purporting to come from the dead and proclaimed as a “new revelation,” that they will not shine by comparison with the utterances of writers of whom Sir Oliver Lodge speaks as inspired. “No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”²

RAYMOND

O. J. L. Raymond, you said your house was made of bricks. How can that be? What are the bricks made of?

FEDA. That's what he hasn't found out yet. He is told by some, who he doesn't think would

¹ *Psychical Investigations*, p. 147.

THE BIBLE

“As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.”—1 Cor. ii. 9.

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”—2 Cor. v. 1.

“Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and

² Luke v. 39.

lead him astray, that they are made from sort of emanations from the earth. He says there's something rising like atoms rising, and consolidating after they come: they are not solid when they come, but we can collect and concentrate them—I mean those that are with me. They appear to be bricks, and when I touch them, they feel like bricks, and I have seen granite too.¹

Can you fancy you see me in white robes?² My suit I expect was made from decayed worsted on your side. Some people here won't take this in even yet—about the material cause of all things. They go talking about spiritual robes made of light, built by the thoughts on the earth plane. I don't believe it.

My body's very similar to the one I had before. The internal organs . . . to all appearances, are the same as before.

People here try to provide everything that is wanted. A chap came over the other day, who *would* have a cigar. "That's finished them," he thought. He means he thought they would never be able to provide that. But there are laboratories over here and they manufacture all sorts of things in them. Not like you do, out of solid matter, but out of essences and ethers and gases. It's not the same as on the earth plane, but they were able to manufacture what looked like a cigar. He (Raymond) didn't try one himself,

¹ P. 198.

to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all and to the spirits of just men made perfect."—HEB. xii. 22, 23.

"And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—REV. vii. 13, 14.

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body."—PHIL. ii. 2.

"And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."—REV. xxi. 27.

"Within thy gates no thing doth come

That is not passing clean,
No spider's web, no dirt, no dust,
No filth may there be seen."

F. B. P.

Based on St. Augustine (c. 1580).

"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither

² P. 189.

because he didn't care to: you know he wouldn't want to. But the other chap jumped at it. But when he began to smoke it, he didn't think much of it: he had four altogether, and now he doesn't look at one. They don't seem to get the same satisfaction out of it, so gradually it seems to drop from them. But when they first come they do want things. Some want meat, and some strong drink; they call for whisky sodas. Don't think I'm stretching it when I tell you that they can manufacture even that. But when they have had one or two, they don't seem to want it much—not those that are over here.¹

There are men here and there are women here. . . . There don't seem to be any children born here. People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane: they don't have them here.²

shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”—REV. vii. 16, 17.

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”—MATT. xxii. 29, 30.

Contrast with these banalities from *Raymond*, audaciously asserted to have come from a discarnate spirit who had been accorded sight of the Redeemer, the lofty note struck by the melodious Silurist, the restraint of which adds to its majesty:

“He that hath found some fledg'd bird's nest may know,
At first sight, if the bird be flown;
But what fair well or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.”

¹ P. 198.

² P. 197.

I cannot know what may be the effect of the quotations from *Raymond* on other minds, but on my own it is to desire extinction rather than to pass an endless life amidst such unsavoury and repellent surroundings. For myself, the only heaven for which I might indulge desire is renewal of communion with those who have been, and who are, dear to me in this life—if this is not to be, then grant me “a right long, endless, and unawakening sleep.”¹

Certainly one result of the nauseous communications dredged from the subconsciousness of mediums in feigned or genuine trance cannot be the revival of interest in the minds of the thoughtful concerning a future life, an interest which, among such, is waning to vanishing point.² Happily the void thereby created is filled by the sense of obligation to the past, of duty to the present, and of responsibility to

¹ Moschus: *Lament for Bion*, idyll iii.

² A significant example of this is supplied by no less an authority than the Dean of St. Paul's in a sermon preached in the Cathedral last Easter Sunday, in the course of which he said: On the subject of immortality people differed greatly, both in what they desired and what they found it possible to believe. Some desired passionately a continuance of the familiar life with which the body was inseparably associated. Tennyson, it was said, grew crimson with excitement if he heard the Resurrection called in question. “If human immortality be not true,” he said, “then no God, but a mocking fiend, created us.” Browning clung to the belief of reunion with his dead wife, without whom continued existence would be intolerable. George Meredith was content with a super-personal immortality. “I am myself,” Dr. Inge declared, “most in sympathy with Browning's faith that love is stronger than death. But as for the survival of the physical organism by which we are known to others as individuals, when we think of our bodily and mental make-up, with all its inherited and acquired defects, its disharmonies which have fretted and tormented us all our days, do we want it resuscitated in another state of existence?” What would be intolerable would be to have to believe that our ideals themselves should perish.

the future; of realisation of the conditions under which we live and which are not of our seeking. But whatever their cause, they supply opportunity for service to, and advancement of, the humanity of which we are parts, and whose joys and sorrows it is our destiny to share.

It may even, as the sense of these responsibilities grows, be incumbent to combat actively a "belief which may easily become an unhealthy occupation, preventing us seeking for salvation here"¹: a belief against which Sir J. G. Frazer brings this powerful, this true indictment:

"It might with some show of reason be maintained that no belief has done so much to retard the economic and thereby the social progress of mankind as the belief in the immortality of the soul, for this belief has led race after race, generation after generation, to sacrifice the real wants of the living to the imaginary wants of the dead. The waste and destruction of life and property which this faith has entailed are enormous and incalculable . . . disastrous and deplorable, unspeakable the follies and crimes and miseries which have flowed in practice from the theory of a future life."²

It should be needless to disclaim that any charge against the integrity of Sir Oliver Lodge and his fellow-spiritualists is made in the animadversions passed on their credulity in these pages. But when he affirms "I am as convinced of continued existence on the other side of death as I am of existence here. It may be said, you cannot be as sure as you are of

¹ *Evolution of Religion*. Vol. ii., p. 243. By Edward Caird.

² *Psyche's Task*, p. 52.

sensory experience, I say I can,"¹ such plainness of speech must be met by equal plainness.

You, Sir Oliver, knowing, as you must have known, the taint which permeates the early history of Spiritualism, its inception in fraud and the detection of a succession of tricksters from the Fox girls onwards, and thereby cautioned to be on your guard, have proved yourself, on your own admission, incompetent to detect the frauds of Eusapia Palladino. You and Sir William Barrett, who says that "*there is evidence of his supernormal knowledge,*"² accept and quote, as parts of a "new revelation," from the automatic writings of the Rev. Stainton Moses. Your faith in the integrity of Mrs. Piper, despite her failure, crowned by her confession, withdrawn, it is true, but none the less a fact, remains unshaken.³ You lose a dear son in the holiest of causes for which a man can die; you forthwith repair to a modern Witch of Endor to seek, at second hand, consolations which assuredly he whom you mourn would, in preference, pour direct into your attuned and sympathetic ear; you—one of the most prominent and best known of men—are simple enough to believe that your anonymity and that of your wife and family was secure at the early séances which Mrs. Leonard and Mr. Vout Peters gave you. And with what dire result—the publication of a series of spurious communications, a large portion

¹ *Raymond*, p. 375.

² *Psychical Research*, p. 227.

³ "It next occurred to Mrs. Piper to be invaded by the crowd of verbose pseudo-spirits who used to communicate with the late Rev. Stainton Moses, who himself, as a posthumous 'communicator,' was a transparent and boastful liar."—Andrew Lang. Letter to *The Pilot*, 23rd November, 1901.

of which is mischievous drivel, dragging with it into the mire whatever lofty conceptions of a spiritual world have been framed by mortals.

What is more serious, your maleficent influence gives impetus to the recrudescence of superstition which is so deplorable a feature of these days. The difference between the mediums whom you consult and the lower grade of fortune-tellers who are had up and fined or imprisoned as rogues and vagabonds is one of degree, not of kind. The sellers of the thousands of mascots—credulity in which as life-preservers and luck-bringers is genuine—the palm-ists, and all other professors of the occult, have in you their unacknowledged patron.

Thus you, who have achieved high rank as a physicist, descend to the plane of the savage animist, surrendering the substance for the shadow. Surely the mysteries which in your physical researches meet you at every turn, baffling your skill to penetrate, should make you pause ere you accept the specious solutions of the momentous problems which lie on the threshold of the Unknown Hereafter.

You, and those who credit you and other notable men of science as speaking with authority, will not be shaken in your convictions; but there may be some who, through reading these pages, will agree that when—it may be, I fear, in no near future—the ghost of Spiritualism is laid its epitaph should be:

“BEHOLD, I WAS SHAPEN IN INIQUITY,
AND IN SIN DID MY MOTHER CONCEIVE ME.”

The Question may be, and should be, asked:

Granted that the evidence which the spiritualists adduce in support of their belief be of a nature which cannot be submitted to the conditions of observation, experiment and proof required by science, are there not materials by which it may arrive at some undogmatic conclusion as to soul-survival? There are, and these are supplied by comparative psychology: the science of mind.

Comparative anatomy has demonstrated the fact of correspondence of bodily structure, bone for bone, muscle for muscle, nerve for nerve, between the highest mammals and man; his fundamental relationship to the anthropoid apes being further proven by the fact that the same kind of blood flows through the veins of the two. And comparative psychology has proved that there is no break in the chain of mental evolution. "The development of the mind in its early stages and in certain directions of progress is revealed most adequately in the animal."¹ There are not two processes of evolution, one of the body and the other of the mind; there is only one process in one series of graduated stages; hence the history of the evolution of brain and nerve is also the history of the evolution of mind.² And it is in the evolution of the brain that the mammals have scored; man, as the "roof and crown" of all living things, thereby securing that lordship in the animal realm of which he has made terrible abuse. His

¹ *Story of the Mind*, p. 35. By Prof. Baldwin.

² "The power of building up appropriate cerebral mechanism in response to individual experience on what may be called 'educability' is the quality which characterises the larger cerebrum and is that which has led to its selection, survival and further increase in volume."—Sir Ray Lankester's *The Kingdom of Man*, p. 123.

dumb subjects, could they have faculty of human speech, would curse that dominance.

This proof of psychical continuity, that ardent and most credulous dupe of mediums, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, disputed. His conception of the denizens of the Beyond excluded animals: "No ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there." Co-formulator with Darwin of the doctrine of natural selection, he argued that it did not explain the origin of man's spiritual and intellectual nature, which, he contended, must have had another origin, an adequate cause to be found only "in the Unseen Universe of Spirit." The question which he did not attempt to answer follows:—At what stage in man's evolution was this "spiritual essence or nature" superadded?¹ Was it, once and for all, in the proto-human creatures who represent both apes and men, being a blend of both ere their divergence from a common ancestor; or is there a special creation of the soul in every human being at birth? To put the question is to submit a problem the solution of which rests with its propounders.

To Job's question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" science can answer neither "yes" nor "no"; all that can be said is that the evidence supplied by comparative psychology does not support the belief in a future life. It leaves it unsolved.

"Into this Universe and *Why* not knowing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing."

¹ *Darwinism*, p. 474.

One fact is clear: there has been no advance in ideas of the soul, and no advance in knowledge of the conditions of existence in any after life, from the dawn of thought to the present day. Spiritualism is the old animism "writ large."

POSTSCRIPT

WHEN my friend Edward Clodd told me that he wished to associate my name with this book, I accepted the compliment, because I felt that it was desirable, indeed a duty, that some member of the scientific fraternity should have the courage to support his indictment. After reading through the proofs, I feel impelled to go a step further and to offer these few lines in direct support of his thesis. Written with utmost sincerity of purpose, straight from the shoulder, in conversational style, without attempt at Stevensonian polish, the book appears to me to be a cumulative and forceful gravamen against a movement every aspect of which is pernicious—pernicious alike to the prime movers and to the public; one which, at all costs, in support of sanity of human outlook, we should seek to stamp out with every weapon at our command.

That the fair name of Science should be sullied by the publication of the “nauseating drivél,” as Mr. Clodd properly terms it, put forward in *Raymond* is not only regrettable but disastrous to our cause; that neither the Church nor educated opinion should have had the courage, the sense of duty, to take real exception to its promulgation cannot well be regarded otherwise than as proof that we are living in an age of intellectual decadence; at least, it

shows that even the inklings of scientific method are not yet spread abroad.

Seemingly, the rules of evidence are disregarded and logic entirely discarded, by the credulous followers of the spiritualistic faith. We are forced, by such facts, to recognise that education counts for very little; that our boasted civilisation is but a thin veneer; that man, as Carlyle persistently maintained, is infinitely gullible. It is clear that we still retain his primal nature and instincts: the tendency to belief in the occult is our heritage.

Indeed, the human mind is strangely built; apparently it has compartments and these are not necessarily interlocked. The great Faraday is probably the most perfect example the world has known of the experimental philosopher; the statements in which he has recorded his experimental studies are pure logic for the most part. His lecture on "Observations on Mental Education," published in a recent reprint of lectures delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, in 1854, under the title of *Science and Education*, from which Mr. Clodd has given quotations, is one of the most brilliant essays ever written on the methods of philosophical thought. But while recognising the value of such methods in ordinary life and insisting on the need of inculcating the faculty of "proportionate judgment" through scientific education, Faraday clearly recognizes the limitations of the human intellect. In matters of religion—he was a member of the small sect known as Glassites or Sandemanians—he advisedly put science aside and gave play to his primitive instincts; he then became the pure child

of nature, a child of faith. We are, it seems, most of us at once both Jekylls and Hydes!

It is certain that only the few can be *scientific* in any proper sense of the term. The philosopher, like every other form of genius, is born, not made; he is more or less a freak. And occupation does not necessarily beget general competence. A man may be most distinguished as a worker within some very narrow field and yet little more than a child in general affairs.

Our modern science is the outcome of experiment and observation logically interpreted. But the element of interpretation always plays a large part: and we may easily err in our interpretations. Our experiments may be accurately conducted and our observations sound, yet our inferences may be altogether unsound. The true man of science, however, is one who never rests satisfied with an explanation: he is always on the look-out for further evidence in support of any conclusion to which he may have been led; he is always prepared to alter his view or hold his judgment in suspense if the evidence be unsatisfactory.

Probably the most telling indictment of telepathy and spiritualism is that afforded by the late Professor Henry Sidgwick of Cambridge, the distinguished moral philosopher, who was an eminently scientific man in his outlook. To quote statements, made by two of his friends, Professor Sorley and Mr. F. Podmore, after his death, which are cited in his biography:¹

¹ *Henry Sidgwick. A Memoir.* By A. S. & E. M. S. London. Macmillan & Co. 1906.

“ Sidgwick exerted a powerful influence, both intellectual and moral, upon his pupils. But his temperament was too critical, his intellect too evenly balanced, to admit of his teaching a dogmatic system. . . . What he taught was much more a method, an attitude of mind; and his teaching was a training in the philosophical temper—in candour, self-criticism and regard for truth. Upon those who could receive it, his teaching had a finer effect than enthusiasm for any set of beliefs; it communicated an enthusiasm for truth itself; the rigour of self-criticism as well as the ardour of inquiry ” (p. 308).

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“ He always seemed to me one of those very rare characters whose insight was so pure and true that his decision, whether in practical matters or in purely intellectual problems, would not be biassed even unconsciously by any personal preference. Great lawyers, no doubt, are trained to deal with one particular class of subjects in this matter. But Mr. Sidgwick’s gift of clear, unbiassed vision on all questions alike has always seemed to me a very rare quality. I don’t think he himself realised how rare. He often gave the rest of the world credit—undeserved credit, as I used to think—for being as disinterested in their judgments as himself ” (p. 319).

Sidgwick—he had been President of the Society for Psychical Research—was in close touch with the spiritualists of his day, including Sir Oliver Lodge; he took part in their so-called investigations on numerous occasions. But he was beyond reach of the “ confidence trick ” and although, apparently, he was willing, if not anxious, to be convinced, he was

never able to believe that the manifestations were otherwise than illusory.

The fact that men such as Sir Wm. Barrett, Sir Wm. Crookes and Sir Oliver Lodge have been ardent advocates of spiritualistic doctrines can only be of "evidential" value if it can be shown that their inquiries have been conducted in accordance with the canons of scientific method. As this is not the case; as moreover they have been shown repeatedly to have been the victims of deception, their testimony has no special weight and is not to be regarded in any way as "scientific evidence." Only when methods such as Sidgwick followed are adopted shall we be able to give any special credence to the statements put forward. As already pointed out, Sidgwick was never persuaded into belief.

As I write this, a letter appears in *The Sunday Times* (16th September, 1917) under the title, "Sir Oliver Lodge's Innocence," written by Mr. Douglas Blackburn. After telling how he and a confederate hoaxed Messrs. Myers, Gurney, Podmore and others by sham telepathic demonstrations and after commenting on "the extraordinary gullibility displayed by Messrs. Myer and Gurney," he thus concludes:

"I say deliberately, as the result of long acquaintance with and personal knowledge of most of the leading Occultists of the past forty years, that, while I acknowledge their absolute honesty and intent, I would not lay a shilling against a ten-pound note on any one of them not being roped in by the venerable Confidence Trick at the first time of asking."

No more telling statement could be made.

I have had occasion before to-day to express my

opinion of Sir Oliver Lodge as a critic, in an article published in the quarterly review *Bedrock*, in January, 1914. My title, "Sir Oliver Lodge, Intolerant, Infallible," was sufficiently significant. To quote one passage:

"Sir Oliver Lodge apparently is an advocate of obscurantism in diction; as a matter of practical politics—from the point of view of those members of the priesthood of science who desire to be credited with oracular attributes—there may be something in it; but to my mind such a policy is absolutely unscientific."

This criticism may be applied verbally to *Raymond*; several of the chapters are nothing short of obscurantism run riot, utterly unscientific in tone, thought and expression.

It is to be feared, however, that too much of "modern science" is but a spurious article; even when sound on the experimental side, the interpretation is too often faulty and heavily biassed. Too many are playing at science who are not, and cannot ever be, scientific; science, in fact, is under a cloud of ecclesiasticism. To quote from the close of my article on Sir Oliver Lodge above referred to:

"Opinions stick, in these days, before they are proved to be sound—if uttered by those in authority. At all costs, this must be prevented if science is to be of service to the State. Authority must be kept in order."

HENRY E. ARMSTRONG.

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